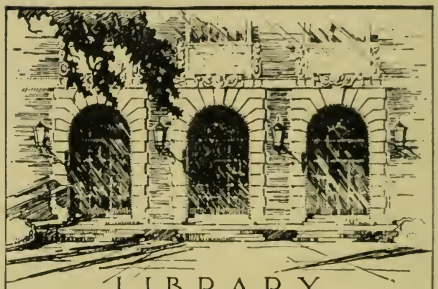
John Waldie

Novels and Romances. } No. 641



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WHO SHALL BE HEIR?

BY

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"THE PRINCE AND THE PEDLAR," "NAN DARRELL," "THE FRIGHT," "THE QUIET HUSBAND," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
T. & W. BOONE, 29, NEW BOND STREET.

1840.

T. C. Newby, Printer, Angel Hill, Bury.

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WHO SHALL BE HEIR?

CHAPTER I.

"WHAT a lovely day! We shall have a delightful walk to the dell, said Rosalind, taking her brother's arm soon after breakfast on the succeeding morning.

"I doubt whether it would not be wise in you to give up your intention of seeing Hester Darley. Mrs. Denham may not be pleased at your visit," replied Michael.

"I would not let a fellow creature starve for

ten Mrs. Denhams, even though that fellow creature should be loaded with guilt," said Rosalind warmly.

"No—not starve—you can send her money without saying from whom. You heard what Mrs. Denham said."

"I am not going to maintain the innocence of poaching, or defend crime of any sort, but that poor old creature with her waning intellect should not be harshly judged; and what I dare to do I dare avow. I will go to the cottage, but go alone. I can never be Mrs. Denham's heir—you may; and therefore shall not lose your chance by a compliance with my wishes."

"It is a pity, Rosalind, as Mrs. Sewell says, that you do not pay more attention to Mrs. Denham."

"It is a pity, Michael, that Mrs. Sewell has not as much wisdom as good-nature, in which case she would not have sickened Mrs. Denham with my praises on my first arrival, and compelled to a line of conduct that should prove

me no servile flatterer—no needy time—server. But do not let us talk of this, dear Michael; I have done—will do nothing to mar your hopes, so just come with me to the lake, where you will find water lillies for Maria, and then I will proceed alone—only don't scold, for I am not in spirits this morning, lovely as it is."

"And what cause can you have to be out of spirits? You were gay enough yesterday evening, and if man's homage can make woman happy Edred Cottrell was sufficiently devoted to ensure your bliss. He never left your side, talking away the whole time at the rate of thirty knots an hour."

"Talking! oh, yes! he talked enough."

"Well, and what would you have more? Are you vexed because Terry Weston has transferred his attentions to Miss Highworth?"

"Perhaps yes—perhaps no. There is no accounting for young ladies' fancies."

"So it seems. Do you want two strings to your bow? If so it is my belief that you

might make Wyvill useful, though he sat apart and never spoke to you yesterday evening."

"I have no desire to make Mr. Wyvill useful," replied Rosalind loftily. "But what is the matter with you this morning, Mike? for you too are out of spirits, and a little bitter, which I never knew you before. Have young gentlemen fancies as well as young ladies?"

"You judge so because I do not talk nonsense like Cottrell. That is always the way with you girls; when you get in love with one man, all others seem tame and insipid because they do not flatter like the one beloved."

"I will not be put off in this way, Michael; something presses on your mind. Why not tell me? There was a time when you told me every thing. What have I done to forfeit your confidence?" asked Rosalind affectionately, bending forward as she hung on his arm to look into his face.

"Nonsense!"—replied Michael turning away.

"No nonsense, dear Mike. Do you love me

less that you will not trust me with your sorrow?"

"I have no sorrow," said her brother in a gentler tone.

"No sorrow perhaps—but some trouble—some vexation. You cannot cheat the ear of affection by a rough denial. Your letter this morning contained unpleasant news;—I saw it at once—you cannot deceive me. Tell me all as you used to do in former days."

"We were children then, Rosalind. Young men have a thousand things to annoy them, that women cannot understand."

"Then let us be children still, dear Michael, in this at least. We stand alone, and should be all and every thing to each other. I have no second brother—you no second sister—let no worldly anxieties disturb our affection—no differing interests disunite us. Turn not away—I must—will know."

"I tell you, Rosalind; there are many

things that you cannot understand; and that would pain you if you could."

"What do you mean?" asked Rosalind anxiously, alarmed at his words.

"Nothing to make you turn so deadly pale, but that is always the way with you women; like Bluebeard's wife, you will know every thing, and then are frightened out of your senses at the knowledge gained."

"Poor Fatima learnt enough to frighten her; but you are not Bluebeard, and have no secrets like the blue chamber to conceal, so please to defer your censures on women to a more fitting time, and tell me what vexes you. I must know the worst now, let it be what it will."

"So I perceive; for you are pale as a lily, and would shake like an aspen if your high resolution did not control your natural impulse. You are a strange girl, Rosalind; a very strange one;—so loving, yet so resolute."

"Never heed my strangeness, but tell me, Michael;—I cannot bear this suspense."

"Well then, since you will hear—but it is no such great matter—the letter is from a dun, who threatens arrest if I do not pay his bill."

"Arrest! What would my mother say? What would Mrs. Denham say?"

"Ay there is the mischief! I should lose her favor entirely if she knew it, for only yesterday she treated Wyvill and myself with, for her, a long harangue touching the sinfulness of young men's running in debt. Vastly fine in her to be sure, with her large fortune! What should she know of our temptations to spend beyond our incomes?"

"Is Mr. Wyvill in debt then?" asked Rosalind.

"He in debt? Oh, no! Cottrell says he is a Jew—a miser;—saving money instead of spending it."

"Edred Cottrell will say any thing to raise

a laugh;—you must not believe all he asserts."

"Perhaps not, but it cannot matter to you, whether Wyvill is miser or spendthrift; nor to me either if we come to that, for he would not lend me money I suppose, though Cottrell says he received a large supply the other day."

"Perhaps he would for a week or so, till you could repay him."

"And I should like to know how I am to repay him, Rosalind? You seem to think sometimes that I am made of money," said her brother pettishly.

"But you could procure it from home."

"Procure it from home! There, Rosalind, that is just what I said! you women never understand any thing. How am I to procure it from home, when it is as much as my father can make the two ends meet at any time. Besides he told me fairly when he paid my last debts, that, in justice to you, he could do nothing more for me."

"Oh! don't let him think of me, dear Mike, if that is all; I would rather that you had the money—I would indeed."

"And you be left a beggar hereafter Rosalind?"

"I have hands and feet, and the blessing of health; and would work them to the bone to spare you pain, dear Michael—and you know it."

"Yes I do know it, Rosalind; and wish that I were half as generous and unselfish, but you have not mixed in the world as I have—one gets sadly mercenary there. I am not such a wretch as that though yet to rob my only sister."

"Not rob, dear Michael; only make her happy by seeing you so. What is the debt?"

"Only a paltry two hundred; but the fellow is impudent, and declares he will not wait. An arrest might spoil my prospects in the army as well as my prospects here—so I must make an excuse to run up to town and

see the fellow;—he may be persuaded to wait for the chance of my being Mrs. Denham's heir."

"But should that hope not be realised," said Rosalind doubtingly.

"Then I must be off for Australia, and he may get paid as he can."

"You could save the money if he gave you time."

"Save the money! nonsense!

"Save half a crown out of sixpence a day—"

Why I cannot live upon my pay and allowance as it is."

"Not live upon it! Do you owe more then?" asked Rosalind in fresh alarm.

"A trifle—a mere trifle"—he said slightingly anxious to calm her fears. "If I could get over this debt, I could manage the rest."

"Oh! I have it!" said Rosalind joyfully. "Shame on me not to think of it before.

There is my godmother's legacy—take it, dear Michael; I am so glad I have it."

"And you would give it to me, Rosalind?—your little all?"

"To be sure, Michael; and only grieve that it is not more."

"You are a noble creature, Rosalind; but you shall make no such sacrifice for me."

"It will be no sacrifice; seeing you happy, I shall be happy too. I cannot bear to think of your being in debt."

"Do you consider it such a horrible thing then to be in debt?" asked her brother quickly.

"It is neither just nor honorable if you know that you cannot pay; but you will pay. I suppose in the army, there come expenses which you cannot count on."

"To be sure, Rosalind—that is just it!" answered Michael hurriedly, avoiding her look, for he felt abashed at her words.

"For what do you owe this man?"

"For horses, harness, military accoutrements and other things that you could not understand."

"You seem to hold my understanding at a very low rate," said Rosalind smiling.

"No, my merry sister, very high in some things; but you do not pretend to a knowledge of horses, harness, military accoutrements, and such like."

"Certainly not," said Rosalind with another smile, little suspecting that Michael's reluctance to name the items of the bill arose from a consciousness that those items would convict him of insincerity at the least; and prove him careless and extravagant in expenditure. "The plague is, that if I were to accept your money —though only as a loan, mind—how am I to get at it, as it is only to be yours on your coming of age, or marrying."

"I cannot marry to-day or to-morrow to please even you, and old Father Time I fear would advance none the quicker for all my

entreaties; but surely Mr. Robson will let you have the money at my request."

"He could not do it in law, being trustee; and would not do it out of favor, as he does not hold me in very high estimation."

"Then what can be done?" asked Rosalind in dismay.

"Ah, there is the thing! I fear my friends the Jews will not advance me any more."

"The Jews! good Heavens, Michael! you do not mean to say that you have been in debt before, and applied to them?"

"What if I have? It is no more than many young men in my situation have done—and will do."

"Do not say so, dear Michael—do not talk so lightly. What would my noble father think, who never owed a shilling? What would my gentle mother feel if she knew this of her son?"

"Come, come, Rosalind, don't weep; it will spoil your eyes, and remember to-day you meet the Ridgeways. I must have you look

your best to charm my Colonel, and do honor to your new dress."

"That new dress! I cannot go to the Pearsons—Ah, Michael how could you give it me, knowing yourself to be in debt? I will never wear it—I have no spirits for company."

"Psha, Rosalind! you are taking this too much to heart," said her brother; but he did not say it in anger and pressed her closer to him as he spoke, "You have lived in seclusion, and are in some things as simple as a child. Had you seen more of the world you would not think so much of a little running in debt, but know that every body does it."

"No, no—not every body, Michael."

"Well nearly every body then. The fact is; I was never meant for a poor man. I cannot pinch and screw as some can—I do not mean to run in debt, but somehow or other things mount up; and then there comes in a long bill without my thinking of it. People ask me to go hither and thither, and do this

and that, and one cannot say—no—it seems so strange and unsociable; and I have not a a shilling to spare for these parties, so no wonder if I am out at elbows."

"Ah, Michael! if you could but gain courage to say—no, and acknowledge your poverty, without heeding a laugh!"

"Ah, Rose! but that is just what I cannot do—never could. It is not in my nature to say —no; you should have been the man—you have so much more firmness, never shrinking from a sneer or a laugh. But I shall get on very well I daresay;—some men get on by their luck—now I have great luck at cards, and have often won small sums—if I played for larger stakes I could soon clear off this paltry debt."

"You would not turn gambler! You would not rob! for it is little better than robbery to play for gain," cried Rosalind starting in alarm, and looking anxiously into his face. "You were only in jest—say that you were only in

jest. Promise not to gamble," she continued, clinging to his arm and raising her pleading eyes to his.

"Do not look in that way, Rose, I cannot bear that earnest gaze. I was only in jest—saying what others say—what I might do—but I have no intention of doing it, so stay your tears, my own dear sister; or let me kiss them off," he added tenderly. "There now let me see you smile again—or scold if you will. Anything but that sad, sorrowful look—I cannot endure its gentle reproach. I would rather have you in a passion, and then I could be in one too."

"In a passion with me, Michael?—I hope that will never be."

"It never can be, Rose; you are too generous—too affectionate for that;—one of your pleading, trusting looks would disarm the greatest brute alive; that is if you loved him, for you have spirit enough for anything if you did not."

"You cannot doubt my love," said Rosalind with one of those very looks which he had declared to be irresistible.

"No, Rosa, I can never doubt that, whatever else I may learn to doubt. So smile upon me, for I hate tears and melancholy things—they give me the blues."

Rosalind did smile upon him; and the brother and sister walked on for some paces in silence.

"Let us finish this unpleasant discussion at once," said Rosalind. "If I sign a paper making over to you two hundred pounds of my legacy, will not that enable you to satisfy this importunate creditor?"

"I am a wretch, Rose, to think of taking it!"

"No, no; that is a settled point. Will this suffice?"

"No, that will not do," said her brother, shaking his head after a moment's thought.

"You are under age, and the act will not be valid in law."

"It will be valid in honor," observed Rosalind, indignantly. "They cannot suppose I would act so dishonestly as to deny my own signature."

"My dear, romantic, high-minded Rosalind! What should usurers know of your lofty principles? They are used to chicanery, and must guard against it."

"I forgot all that," said Rosalind with a half smile at her own simplicity. "Then what will you do?"

"Take a few hours to consider; perhaps write—perhaps go to the man, and request time, though I would rather not leave Denham just at present, lest its mistress should suspect the truth and hold me in less favor; at any rate, nothing need be done till to-morrow, so let us enjoy ourselves till then. You must be in your best looks and spirits this evening for I have

spoken of my sister as she deserves, and have set my heart on this report being confirmed among my brother officers by Colonel Ridgeway and his son.

"Do not ask me to go, dear Mike; I should feel too anxious and dispirited to acquit myself tolerably, and the opinion of your brother officers can matter little."

"The opinion of Colonel Ridgeway may matter a great deal, for he has considerable interest, and might exert it in my favor. You will find his lady a very delightful woman, and his son, pleasant and gentlemanly. Besides what reason could you assign for staying at home? You would not tell a falsehood, I know; and the truth would injure me with Mrs. Denham and the Colonel, for he is particular about his officers paying their debts, and you know our hostess approved of your accepting the invitation, though she has not yet called on the Pearsons, who are only just come into the neighbourhood."

"I can say I have a head-ache—that will be rue I am sure."

"And yet might give offence. Mrs. Ridgeway has expressed a wish to be introduced to you, and might consider the head-ache a mere excuse. You will go, Rose, for my sake; and exert yourself to win hearts and friends for me."

"I cannot resist you, Mike; and you know that. Perhaps too it is better that I should go —but alas, for spirits!"

"Oh, they will come! And the new dress too—I am sure you will look so well in it; and I will prepare you such a bouquet. So fare you well, sweet Rose, and forget all that we have been talking about. Nay, never shake your head—it will all go right I daresay, if you do not fret. There is a kiss to make you gay, and now be off."

"Rosalind's step was slow and heavy as she proceeded on her way, for the late conversation had made a deep impression on her mind.

Even her strong affection for her only brother could not blind her to the fact that he was deficient in firmness—could not say, no—could not withstand temptation or ridicule—and worse, she feared, had no longer that keen sense of honor—those high incorruptible principles which were so conspicuous in her father. He was generous, good-tempered, and indulgent to others; but unhappily, more indulgent to himself, and something warped from his former singleness of mind by his intercourse with worldly men. The thought was painful —very painful; and Rosalind strove to banish it. "She was judging him harshly—she could not calculate on the force of temptation—she knew—could know nothing of the trials to which he was subjected—young men spoke more lightly of debts than they really thought; —as to gambling, that was mere jest, he was still true at heart and pure in mind." So thought—so would think Rosalind. She judge him harshly!—she loved too well for that.

At any rate, there was no use in dwelling on the subject, so, wiping away her tears and clearing her husky voice, she passed on her way with a quicker step, trying to cheat herself into gaiety.

The door of the hovel was half open, and Rosalind entered without knocking. There lay the aged crone in her bed as she had lain the day before; but beside that bed stood a female with a basket on her arm. There was no mistaking that formal, upright figure—it was Mrs. Denham.

Rosalind started back in surprise; and Mrs. Denham, warned of her presence by a motion of the old woman's hand, turned full upon her.

"You did not expect to find me here," observed Mrs. Denham, with, as Rosalind thought, a little—a very little triumph in her tone, as if enjoying her guest's confusion.

"I did not indeed," answered Rosalind with a feeling of self-reproach at having misjudged

her hostess the day before, for the old woman's satisfied look was sufficient proof that her visitor had provided, or promised to provide for her wants.

"Where is your brother? I thought I saw you together in the distance, as I came hither."

"I left him at the lake gathering water lillies for Maria," answered Rosalind, a little annoyed at the question from a consciousness of the reason why Michael had not accompanied her further.

"Is he to wait for you there?"

"Oh, no!"

"Perhaps he guessed your destination," observed Mrs. Denham with more keenness in her look than Rosalind had ever before remarked.

She coloured at the observation, and fancying that her hostess saw and rejoiced in her confusion—hesitated a moment—then answered frankly.

"I conclude he did, as I had spoken of my intention some time before, when he advised me not to come, but leave Hester Darley to your care."

"It was prudent advice. Why did you not follow it?"

"Had I known of your being here, Mrs. Denham, I might have done so."

"You thought me yesterday insensible to suffering, Miss Trevor:—you judge from feeling rather than facts, and therefore will often judge unjustly. I am not aware of having permitted any one in my village to die of hunger, though he or she may have stolen my wood, or shot my game."

"I wronged you, Mrs. Denham—I judged too harshly," said Rosalind frankly; and had Mrs. Denham's manner been less cold and formal her apology for that misjudgment would have been more cordial.

"Hasty judgment is the error of youth—I can excuse it; but let it be a warning for the

future. The woman and child shall be cared for, so you need feel no further anxiety on their account."

"Thank you!" said Rosalind more warmly, as if the kindness had been personal.

"Yes; I am to have meat, and bread, and beer," cried the old woman in a tone of exultation that was distressing, counting the various gifts on her shrivelled fingers. "Yes all these! but I won't leave the cottage though. It is mine—my son built it; and I won't go—and I won't tell where he is—they shan't make me—and I won't have a woman here, eating up all my victuals—no—no."

"This refers to my wish to remove her where she can be more comfortable, and have some one besides her grand-daughter to wait upon her, but she is obstinate on this point. I wish you would persuade her to consent to the change—I never succeed in persuading any one," said Mrs. Denham, and there was something sad in her tone as she uttered the last

words, or Rosalind thought so; and set about her task with more alacrity for the fancy.

"This lady will place you in a more comfortable cottage," she said approaching the old woman and bending kindly over her. "The wind comes in at those cracks, and will give you the rheumatism. Think of the comfort of a nice warm house, and some one grown up to talk to; and then your grand-child could go to school, and learn to read and work, and hereafter she would be able to read the bible to you in the long winter evenings, and mend all your clothes. You would like to go to school, should not you?" she asked, turning to the little girl, who had hitherto stood with eyes fixed on the floor, in evident awe of Mrs. Denham.

"Yes, very much," answered the timid child, pressing to Rosalind's side, won by the sweetness of her voice and manner.

"No I won't go—I will stay here"—cried the old woman doggedly. "Little Hester can

have book learning next year when I am gone to my grave, and I don't want any one to talk or read to me."

"But it will be so dull and cold here in the winter," continued Rosalind perseveringly.

"I may die before winter;—I won't go—I won't go!"—was Hester Darley's only answer.

Rosalind pointed out the large crack at the foot of the bed.

"Let her fill it up! I won't go—I know the old place, and I won't leave it;—young folks don't know how we old people like what we have been used to many-a-day."

"Oh, yes! I can understand that; but you have only been here four years."

"It don't matter—I won't go."

"But this lady wishes it; and consider how kind she has been."

"Ay, ay, I know why she wants it—but I won't go—she shan't catch him. She has never had a child—she does not know what a mother feels. She would hang my boy if she

could—I know she would; and all for bringing his poor old mother something when she was starving. The rich don't feel for the poor —I won't go—I won't tell," cried the old woman angrily, passion getting the better of her prudence. "The curse of the dying upon those who would wrong the old, and send them childless to the grave."

Rosalind glanced at Mrs. Denham to mark the effect produced by this violence. Not a trace of anger was to be seen; and her speech was as measured as before.

"You are mistaken; I only seek your good in wishing to remove you to a better cottage."

"My good—my good!—nobody seeks my good. What do the rich care for an old woman like me? You have a false tongue—You would seem kind to the mother to catch the son; but you shan't have him whilst I live," screamed the old woman, shaking her clenched hand at Mrs. Denham.

"Hush! hush! you are mistaken; this lady

only wishes to serve you," said Rosalind soothingly.

"And who are you?" questioned Hester Darley peering into her face. "Oh! I know you now—you were here yesterday, and gave me bread when I was starving; and you spoke kindly too—very kindly. I would thank you; and there was some one else—I would thank him too; but I don't mind to-day what happened yesterday. You speak softly—you seem good—don't let her take me away!" she pleaded clasping Rosalind's hand, her feelings taking a new turn as her feeble body sank beneath the excitement of her late passion. "Promise me that I shall stay here till I die—it will not be long first; and then he can close my eyes. He is not far off,"—she added in a hollow whisper, bending towards Rosalind, and forgetting that Mrs. Denham must hear her words.

"Tell her she shall live here as long as she likes; and that I will make the cottage com-

fortable," said Mrs. Denham in a low voice in answer to Rosalind's appealing look.

Miss Trevor repeated her words to the old woman slowly and distinctly, for her strength was failing, and with her strength her power of comprehension.

"Stay here till I die—and he close my eyes. Bless you! God blesses when the poor bless. And that woman—she is a hard woman; but she keeps her word. Meat—bread--tea—beer" —murmured the crone, sinking back on the pillow from exhaustion.

"A little wine will revive her," said Mrs. Denham, pouring out some which she had sent that morning into the broken cup, and making a motion for Rosalind to give it.

The wine did revive her; but as she seemed inclined to sleep Mrs. Denham and Rosalind left the cottage after the former had given some needful directions to the little girl, and promised to send some nourishing broth and other things in the course of the day,

adding — "they shall be here before five o'clock."

Could she mean by this to intimate that the old woman's son need fear no interruption from her domestics after that hour? Rosalind could not tell—and certainly would not ask.

She had no fancy for a *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Denham, but as that lady seemed to expect her company as a matter of course, she could not very well hint a dislike to her society, or strike into another path; so on they lounged for a time in silence, which was at last broken by her hostess.

"You are a good pleader, Miss Trevor, though you did not prevail with that wilful woman. Were you to plead thus for yourself, that pleading would be irresistible with most people."

"I could not plead for myself as I can plead for another," answered Rosalind hurt by her companion's remark.

"That is a proud reply. Remember, that

pride was the sin by which the angels fell. There is a medium between servility and haughtiness."

"There is a medium between most vices, and that is virtue; but it is difficult to find the exact mean," said Rosalind less proudly, wondering what were her companion's thoughts.

"It requires a cool judgment to find it, and youth is generally hot and impatient."

"Youth is a sin that one mends of every day; and if age bring wisdom as well as coldness, we may all hope to be sages at last," said Rosalind a little warmly.

"There may be coldness without wisdom—and wisdom without coldness, Miss Trevor."

"Save me from coldness, and I will compound to be a simpleton all my life," cried Rosalind little pleased with the rebuking tone of the last remark.

"You are judging from false premises, and thus forming a false judgment; but it would be useless to discuss this subject further; youth

only learns from experience. Shall we go home by the lake, and rejoin your brother?"

"I am ready to go any way you please, Mrs. Denham; but there is little chance of finding Michael at the lake."

"Was he not to wait for you?"

"No; he knew nothing of my intended movements save that I was going to the cottage."

Mrs. Denham took the path by the lake without further question; and there was another silence, which she was again the first to break.

"That old woman appeared to count on the presence of her son, yet I was informed that he had left the neighbourhood. He risks much in remaining, as there is another warrant out against him for a second offence."

"In that case his risk is great indeed, for his mother's growing imbecility will probably betray him to his enemies; and one less gene-

rous than yourself may act on her imprudent words."

"Do you mean to hint, or to question by that remark?" asked Mrs. Denham with a quickness unusual to her, and which for the instant confounded her companion.

"Either—or neither—or both; I am not quite sure which," she answered after a moment's hesitation. "The truth is, Mrs. Denham," she added, colouring, yet speaking with her accustomed frankness, "I am such a devoted admirer of affection in all classes, and under all circumstances, that I am greatly interested for this old woman, and thence for her son. She says much that she should not say, and there is at times a wolfish look about her which is fearful to meet; but through the ruin of her intellect gleams love for her child, shedding an almost holy light over the wreck of mind and body. Strength has already departed—sense is fleeting fast; but affection

lingers still as strong—as pure as ever. She would starve rather than tell where her son abides; and yet she knows what hunger is, and craves after food with animal voracity. And her son—surely he cannot be quite depraved;—he must have some good feelings left, or his mother would not dote upon him as she does; nor would he risk his liberty, perhaps his life, to linger near her."

"You plead eloquently, Miss Trevor, as I remarked before; but your judgment, as I also observed, is founded on feeling, not fact. I have heard no good of Stephen Darley, but much evil; yet I will agree with you in hoping that he is not utterly depraved. A good son gives a promise of better things than are told of him."

"Then you will not enforce the warrant against him, but give him time and opportunity for repentance," said Rosalind eagerly.

"I must enquire farther before I decide; fond mothers will sometimes dote on the most

worthless children. Besides, there are other charges against him made by those who would show him no favor; and I do not know, having procured the warrant, how I can consistently interfere to prevent its execution."

Rosalind was silent—checked by this chilling reply; and after a short pause Mrs. Denham continued, but her observation seemed addressed more to herself than her companion.

"Constant affection is a beautiful—a blessed thing! but there are few, who enjoy it—few who can feel it."

"I trust there are many," said Rosalind hopefully, struck with her companion's tone.

"You are young, Miss Trevor; you know nothing of the world—you have yet to learn how falsehood wears the semblance of truth," replied Mrs. Denham, and Rosalind saw that the calm smooth brow was slightly contracted. "But that woman did not feign—she is to be envied—she has a son to love, who loves her," she added, then encountering Rosalind's

wondering look, she remarked abruptly, "But here is the lake and your brother not near, so you must be contented with me as your sole companion till we reach the house. I think you have taken a sketch of this lake."

"I have taken two."

"I should like to see them."

"I am very sorry, but I sent them to my mother only yesterday. She has often described it to me as one of her favorite haunts in childhood, as well as later years, and expressed a wish for a sketch."

"I thought the beauties of Ivy Cottage, and the happiness of her married life had banished all these early remembrances," observed Mrs. Denham with her wonted coldness, mingled, Rosalind fancied, with a little sarcasm.

"My mother is constant in her affections: she has not forgotten the friend of her youth, and the scenes where they wandered together hand in hand."

"You have a lively imagination Miss Trevor; and construct emphatic sentences."

"I have a warm heart, madam, and perhaps imprudently follow its dictates."

"There are persons who boast of a warm heart, as if they considered it an excuse for every frailty under the sun; reason is a safer guide—but we were discussing landscapes not morals. From whence did you take your sketch?"

Rosalind pointed out the spot in silence.

"I prefer the view from the other side," remarked Mrs. Denham with the same unruffled tone as if she had not observed Rosalind's indignation at her chilling comments.

"I perfectly agree with you, my dear madam," said Richard Weston, advancing from a diverging path.

"Before you know the merits of the case," remarked Mrs. Denham drily.

"I trust to your judgment on all points," he

replied with the complimentary manner which he assumed to her, and to no one else.

As for Rosalind, she cared nothing for his decision against her, but for once, his presence was truly welcome, since it interrupted the *tête-à-tête* with her cold blooded, sententious hostess, for he insisted on returning with them to the house, though Mrs. Denham advised a continuation of his walk with an earnestness that evinced no wish for his company.

"Where have you three been roaming?" enquired Edred, joining them on the lawn.

"I found Mrs. Denham and Rosalind sentimentalising by the lake," replied Richard Weston.

"I wish I had been of the party, for I am in a sentimental mood this morning."

"Then I am very glad that you were not of the party, for I detest sentiment, and never encourage it in myself or others," said Mrs. Denham with unusual energy.

"Where did you fall in with Mrs. Den-

ham?" asked Michael, who was also sauntering on the lawn, taking his sister aside under the pretext of showing her a flower.

"I suppose you mean where did I fall out with her. At Hester Darley's cottage."

"You did? That was unlucky."

"Only in so far as it compelled me to walk back with her; and I would sooner have endured a *tête-à-tête* with a Chinese Mandarin. I made her clearly understand that you had protested against my going."

"You do not seem to have got on well with her."

"Get on!—I wish I could get off."

"Do you mean that you desire to go back to Ivy Cottage immediately?"

"Perhaps not exactly; having been here at the commencement of the drama, I have become rather interested in the performance, and would wait to witness its conclusion."

"Interested in the performance, or the performers, Rosalind?"

"Both. Are not you one of the performers?"

"Ay, and Edred Cottrell too, fair sister; and it is difficult to say which will be the hero of the piece."

"You are certain that one will?"

"Are not you, Rosalind?"

"I am certain of nothing but death, the taxes and scandal," replied his sister gaily.

"I comprehend that merry answer, Rosalind. There is one point on which young ladies consider themselves justified in using evasions—if not worse. Well, if I must yield the prize I would rather it should be to Edred Cottrell than to any other, for he is a true hearted, good-natured fellow, and I could not envy you. Spare your blushes and protestations—they are not worth wasting on a brother; and away with that gathering frown, for I have good news to tell you;—all is settled about that plaguy debt."

"Is it? I am delighted!"

"I see you are. The finest diamond is not brighter than your eyes at this moment."

"Keep your compliments for Maria, brother, and tell me what good fai y has helped you out of your difficulty."

"That good fairy is Edred Cottrell—he has lent me the money."

"Do not tell me so?" exclaimed Rosalind, turning deadly pale, then flushing a deep crimson.

"Why, what is the matter? I thought you were a great friend of Edred's," observed her brother, laying a stress on the word friend.

"I would not have had him know of this debt on any account. It will reach Mrs. Denham's ears within the week," said Rosalind without making any comment on his assertion of her friendship for Edred.

"Oh! no it won't;—he has promised the strictest secrey."

"He may promise, but you should know how he keeps secrets—and such a secret!"

"Pooh! pooh! Rosalind; you think no one can keep a secret but yourself; I know what you mean. You fancy that he will let it out in one of his wild moods when he rattles on like mad; but he has engaged to be very careful not to give a hint to any one; and I am sure I may rely upon him, so don't look so frightened. Besides it is done now."

"Yes it is done! But how came it done? You never glanced at such an expedient whilst conversing with me."

"No such a thought never came into my head till Cottrell put it there. He saw me in the dumps, as he said, and being a good-natured fellow asked what was the matter, offering to assist me. I don't know how exactly but somehow or other he got at the truth, and insisted on lending me the two hundred pounds, though he is not over rich himself just now; but he had a fellow feeling for me, he said, having known at one time what it was to have a pinching allowance and an unpinching

disposition. Having mixed in the world, he understands these things, and does not count running a little in debt, one of the seven deadly sins, as some other persons do."

"It is a pity that all do not think a little more seriously of these things. And how is Edred to be repaid?"

"Somehow or other, one of these days; he says he does not want the money now. Don't look so grave and moral, Rose; it does not become you. Besides, it is too late to give me a lecture."

"Too late indeed!" said his sister with a sigh.

"Yes and too late for sighing too. You are to look very gay and bewitching this evening mind; and I am going to coax Mrs. Denham out of one of her camellias for your hair."

"No, no;" cried Rosalind, but Michael was already standing beside his hostess.

"Now, my dear Mrs. Denham, I must beg a favor. You know that we are to meet my

Colonel and his lady at the Pearson's to-day, and having boasted of Rosalind's beauty among my brother officers, I am anxious that she should look very well, so am come to make love to you for a white camellia to adorn her raven tresses."

"That is you wish her to be the toast of the mess," observed Mrs. Denham drily.

"It is the last thing that I desire," said Rosalind quickly, fancying a sarcasm in her hostess's words.

"None would dare name you in my presence in a way to which you could object; and you should know that," remarked Michael vexed in his turn.

"I do know it, dear Mike," said Rosalind affectionately: "but your friends must laugh at your brotherly partiality; and I would not be even an innocent accessary to their jesting."

"I am too fond of my sister to mind being laughed at on account of my regard for her, so you may spare yourself that anxiety, Rosalind."

"Miss Trevor is not looking well this morning; her eyes are heavy, and she has a shade of care which may militate against your designs," remarked Mrs. Denham, turning a cold yet observing gaze on Rosalind.

"She has been talking to that old woman, I suppose, which is enough to make any one so full of pity as my sister ugly and miserable; but see, she has a brilliant colour now, which has given light to her eyes, and with the help of your camellia, take my word for it, she will be enchanting," said Michael, to save Rosalind from the difficulty of accounting for her heavy eyes.

Mrs. Denham not only picked the best camellia her conservatory afforded, but a choice bouquet besides to the wonder of Rosalind, and the delight of her brother, who began to consider her by no means such an awful person as some imagined.

"Well, Rosalind, you deserve the camellia; and that new dress too," exclaimed Michael

Trevor, encountering his sister as she descended the stairs dressed for the dinner party at the Pearsons. "Is she not the very queen of beauty?" he added appealing to Wyvill, who was beside her. "The cheek only wanted a little deeper rose, and now there it has it. Don't you envy me, and wish that she were your sister?"

"No!" answered Rupert with an abruptness and energy that deepened the damask on Rosalind's cheek to a rich carmine.

"What do you mean? Any one might be proud of such a sister," said Michael sharply. "But you do not appreciate her as she deserves—you are a cold stoical reasoner, with no taste for the beautiful in mind or person: your heart never beats the quicker at the sight of the most exquisite loveliness."

"Am I so cold and stoical?" questioned Rupert Wyvill with sudden fire, his short lip quivering with emotion as he spoke.

"Not at this moment! you are the very

personification of passion. What is come to you, Wyvill?—there is no making you out."

"I should rather say there was no taking him in," said Edred, who had caught the last observation.

"I leave you to do that, Cottrell, and content myself with taking in Rosalind to be looked at," said Michael Trevor; and before she guessed his purpose, or could thwart it, her brother had whisked her into Mrs. Denham's study, and she was standing before that lady to be criticised.

"Now, Mrs. Denham, does not Rosalind do credit to your camellia, as I said she would? Has she not thrown it among her raven curls with a most careless and becoming touch? And may not a brother be excused for feeling proud of such a sister?"

"Yes, it is all as you say," replied Mrs. Denham after looking at Rosalind for a minute through her spectacles. "She is very different

to what she was an hour ago. Her dress too is elegant and becoming."

"I am delighted to have your approval—I must boast—it was a present from me."

"It is a proof of your taste; and I suppose I must add brotherly affection. There is only that one curl that I should like altered—brought a little lower."

The curl was brought lower as she desired, and the old lady not only expressed her approbation of the change, but sent a very gracious message to the Pearsons, comprising an apology for not having called, on account of a lame carriage horse; and a request that they would waive all ceremony and with the Ridgeways fix some day the succeeding week to dine at Denham Park.

Michael's spirits rose high — his hopes rose higher—and as he handed his sister across the hall to the carriage his tread was the lordly tread of a master.

"The cat has not such sharp claws as people say," he whispered to Rosalind.

"Cats can sheathe their claws when they please, and pat with velvet paws," replied his sister in as low a voice.

"I shall take care of number one, and secure a seat next Rosalind," said Edred Cottrell, who with Wyvill was to be of the party, both being acquainted with young Ridgeway, springing into his place as he spoke.

"Fair play is a jewel, so you shall sit opposite to her," said the laughing Michael, motioning Wyvill to get in next—a motion instantly acted on.

"So that is your notion of fair play is it, Trevor? Always sit next to a beautiful woman with a mind, opposite to one without."

"That may be very well for you, Cottrell, who have the gift of the gab; but we more silent people win by admiring looks."

"Gift of the gab, Trevor!—eloquence you

mean—natural eloquence. Pray do not accuse me of any thing so vulgar, as the gift of the gab."

Michael was not disappointed in the effect he expected his sister to produce, for she was admitted by all to be not only the most lovely, but also the most elegant and pleasing girl in the room. Her morning's woes were forgotten, or laid aside for that evening; she was all animation with the animated—all gentleness with the gentle; and if her eyes were sometimes fixed on the ground as though she dared not raise them, the beholder could scarcely regret it, the shading of the lashes on her peachy cheek gave such a touching softness to her features, whilst the sudden glancing of those eyes was as a rush of light. Not only was Colonel Ridgeway struck with her fascinations, but his lady and son were still more enchanted, and delighted Michael with her praises, whilst several strangers present besieged the Pearsons for introductions to their lovely guest, so that

she had no lack of partners in the dance which succeeded the dinner.

There seemed some spell about her to subdue all hearts. Old and young—male and female were equally fascinated; and even Michael admitted that he had never before been so much struck with her varying loveliness, and wonderful powers of pleasing; now gay and spirited —now soft and subdued, as the subjects on which she was conversing touched or stirred her.

And what was this spell? Not vanity for she appeared perfectly unconscious of the admiration she excited;—her pleasing was involuntary—not the effect of study. Was it the spell of hope?—of happiness? Was she inspired by Cottrell's eloquence, as he termed it, which had flowed almost incessantly during the drive, leaving Wyvill no time for any more lengthened remark than a brief whisper as he aided in handing her from the carriage, or only by a desire to please her brother? We ask not—we tell not

Let others analyze a sunbeam—we would bask in it.—Enough that her mood seemed bright and happy, so happy that she could not even quarrel with Rupert Wyvill as she had done of old, when she honored him with her hand. Not a sharp word was exchanged between them—scarcely even a playful raillery; but he talked more than was his wont, whilst she talked less;—he showed no trace of indolence—she none of im patience. His falcon eye sparkled and flashed —his speech came quick and powerful as the speech of one who is pouring forth the thoughts and feelings of a stirred and passionate heart to one of a kindred nature; and she listened the while with a deep and earnest attention, as one who felt and owned the speaker's power.

"Rosalind has inspired even Wyvill; I had no idea he could talk in such a style as that," was Michael's thought after listening for some moments to an enthusiastic burst full of the richest, yet most apropriate imagery with glory for its text. "No wonder that Rosalind's

attention is so enchained—it is just the thing to enchant her."

Edred might have thought the same, and like him, wondering at Rosalind's rapt and blushing interest, have listened to learn its cause, had he not been engaged at the time in another room, playing the pretty to a fair but *exigeante* damsel who claimed all his cares.

It was very late before Rosalind left the Pearsons escorted to the carriage by half a dozen attendant beaux, including Colonel Ridgeway, who, his lady asserted, had not only promised to use his influence in the brother's favor, but had offered the sister a commission if she would enter his regiment, an offer she added in which she cordially joined, and which the laughing Rosalind promised to take into consideration.

The *partie carrée* returned in position as they had arrived; but as Rosalind, pleading fatigue, leant back in the carriage, showing no inclination to encourage Edred's eloquence by listen-

ing, he soon sank into silence, and the others followed his example, thinking or sleeping as the case might be.

"Have you enjoyed yourself?" asked Mrs. Sewell, appearing at her door in her dressing gown as Rosalind passed.

"So much! I was so happy, Minny. But you must not stand talking here; so good night," cried Rosalind, kissing her old friend on both cheeks, and then tripping lightly along the gallery.

CHAPTER II.

"HEIGH HO! what a thorough wet day. There will be no stirring out," exclaimed the yawning Miss Bailey, on the second morning after the dinner at the Pearsons.

Miss Bailey for once was right—it was a thorough wet day, leaving no hope of even a stroll on the terrace. And who has not felt the misery of a wet day in summer, in a country house with a large party, few intellectual, and some unsociable? I say in summer particularly

because a wet day is considered a greater hardship then than in winter, and people expecting to be amused without doors, are less inclined to be amused within. Besides there is no fire to poke—no dust or smoke to grumble at—no hunting, shooting, coursing or skating, to be enjoyed or discussed—and unless there should chance to be a cricket match in the neighbourhood—what can the young gentlemen possibly converse about?—unless they chance to be fishermen, which few are, and those usually quiet, silent persons; or magistrates, in which case they may discourse on poor laws or corn laws, sessions and grand juries, to the great edification of the ladies present. Unhappily there chanced to be neither magistrates nor fishermen at Denham Park, so the merits of laws and flies remained unargued. It was the time for racing, and yachting, though rather early for either; but unluckly there was no celebrated race course within fifty miles—no anchorage for yachts

within sixty. There was not even the gentlemanly resource of billiards, for, owing to some alterations in doors, flues, or stoves, then performing, the table could not be used, or the hall itself employed as an arena for *les Graces* or battledore. So the gentlemen, with the exception of Wyvill who sat with a book in a quiet corner not far from Rosalind, yawned and fretted—walked to one window, and then to another—debated the way of the wind, and the age of the moon—went out to examine the state of the barometer and thermometer—returned to yawn still louder—took up books—laid them down—criticised the ladies' work—pulled about their wools—unthreaded their needles—then sauntered once more to the windows with their hands in their pockets—wondered how Mrs. Denham could be so tramontane as to forbid cigars under any roof in her domain, and then struck up a gaping chorus in which, not to be unjust, it must be admitted that the ladies

lent their assistance, only half smothering their yawns with their handkerchiefs.

Commend me to a wet day to learn the calibre of a man's mind—the stuff of which he is made—his powers to do and to bear.

Yet it must be allowed that a wet, an entire wet day, is a very great trial to man or woman, and as Mrs. Denham never professed to entertain her guests, and Mr. Adnam and Cottrell having letters to write could not do it for her, no wonder that they felt drowsy and dissatisfied—ready to quarrel with themselves or others.

They had all eaten a good luncheon, making the meal as long as they could to pass away the time that hung so heavy on their hands, but they could not well prolong it beyond sixty minutes, so there were still unhappily some hours to be disposed of before dinner. No wonder therefore that Miss Bailey should sigh deeply when announcing that it was a thorough wet day.

"It is very dull! I don't know how to amuse myself," she added finding that no one contradicted her assertion, which might have afforded some hope of variety.

"Suppose you fall in love, that being the best approved and most fashionable plan for amusement on a wet day," observed Edred Cottrell, as he folded his last letter.

"I leave that for the gentlemen," answered Miss Bailey smartly.

"I intend to set about it immediately. Will you be my partner in the game, cousin Rosalind?"

"Excuse me; I have not time, being most particularly engaged in giving black eyes to Mrs. Sewell's Mameluke—it is only idle persons who fall in love."

"Better make *les yeux doux* than *les yeux noirs*," said Edred, laughing at Rosalind's reply which had caused a general smile.

"I do not know that; the former may cause more evil than the latter;—the serpent that

glides, is as dangerous as the tiger that springs."

"You have not convinced me, fair Rose, being in a loverlike humour. I will leave to others *les yeux noirs*, only accord me *les yeux doux*."

"You are wrong; and not over gallant. Goulard will cure *les yeux noirs*—the wounds from *les yeux doux* are not always so easily healed," observed Mr. Adnam.

"I would run the risk," persisted Edred.

'Light spirits cannot suffer long.'—

"The bee sips the honey then flies to the rest," said Mr. Adnam.

"Do you call me one of these light and fickle spirits?" asked Edred in pique, addressing Rosalind.

"It was not my remark; but I should say wear the cap if it fits—if not leave it to others."

"I leave it to others then—it does not fit me."

"You have not told us what we shall do to amuse ourselves, and every body is so stupid this morning; even you have not said a single funny thing," interposed Miss Bailey, vexed that Edred should talk to Rosalind instead of herself.

"I never say anything funny—it is vulgar to be funny."

"La! now, how can you talk so? you are always saying funny things."

"Clever things if you please, Elizabeth."

"Well clever things if you will have it so; only do pray, there is a good soul, tell us some way to amuse ourselves, as we cannot play billiards, or *les Graces*, or battledore, or look over the odd old books in the library."

"Why do you apply to me? Am I a fool or a mountebank hired to furnish entertainment for the company? Why don't you apply to Wyvill."

"Oh! he is a book worm—there is no getting any fun out of him."

"Try for once."

"Mr. Wyvill, what shall we do to amuse ourselves?" asked Miss Bailey speaking aloud.

"Play the fool," replied Rupert gaily, flinging aside his book.

"Will you teach us then, for we don't know how," said Miss Bailey, tittering at what she considered wit.

"Readily. Who enrols himself in my company?"

"What to do?" asked several

"Play the fool—alias act charades."

"Put me down for one, as I am tired of yawning, and being yawned at, and have just given the Mameluke his black eyes," said Rosalind.

"Oh! yes let us all act charades," cried one and all of the young people, though several added immediately. "But I cannot act at all —I never could—you must teach us."

"We will teach each other and enact pupils

turned masters," answered Rupert, shaking off the languor which still at times opprest him.

"But perhaps Mrs. Denham might not like it," remarked Maria, who was daily drilled by her mother into doing nothing contrary to Mrs. Denham's wishes.

"Instead of having any objection, I will play audience," said Mrs. Denham, who having just entered the room had overheard the observation. "You can arrange your plots and dress in the little library, and Gibson shall bring you the needful paraphernalia;—there are some old fashioned garments in one of the wardrobes, which will answer your purpose well."

"It will be capital fun!" exclaimed Miss Bailey. "Only think of Rupert Wyvill's having suggested an amusement."

"And proposed to play the fool," added Edred sarcastically.

"Are you annoyed at my usurping your

office?" asked Rupert gaily. "Resign it to me but for one brief hour; and then you shall resume it at your pleasure."

"Oh! you will be of the party, Edred—won't you? We could not do without you," said Miss Bailey, who would fain have had him for her slave could she have accomplished it.

"Sages must condescend to fools sometimes, and I would not spoil your amusement, so let us adjourn to the little library at once," answered Edred Cottrell after a moment's hesitation, banishing the frown that Rupert's words had caused, and speaking as if he were to be the head of the company of actors.

"Will you admit an old man, but a merry one?" asked Mr. Adnam. "I will play Scrub—or footman—or Billy Button—or dumbie—or a nigger—or a cat—or a dog—or any thing to be useful."

"Admit you!—to be sure we will; our party would be nothing without you," replied

Rupert before Edred could speak. "You shall be manager and *maitre de ballet*—with some limitations."

The tables and chairs were moved back so as to leave a space for the actors—Mrs. Denham and her elderly guests took their places at the upper end of the room as audience; and the young party, increased in number by some visitors who merit not an introduction, departed to arrange all needful preliminaries.

These preliminaries are apt to prove awkward things where there is no resolute head to decide on character, tale, and costume; and here there was no resolute head, for Edred did not choose to yield that station to Wyvill, and Wyvill, having proposed the charades, did not choose to yield that station to Edred, so all was confusion till Mr. Adnam, in accordance with Rupert's proposition, was, to his great delight, invested with the honors of manager, subject however, as he soon found, to the protestations, contradictions, and even refusals of

his company. To free himself from some portion of his difficulties he proposed that the word should be decided by lot; and that lot falling on Michael Trevor, he claimed some share in the distribution of the parts and arrangement of the story, whilst the suggestions of Cottrell and Wyvill who had acted before were allowed considerable weight in the deliberations. Gibson attended with cloaks, shawls, scarfs, veils, antique dresses, arms, &c. and the robing commenced amid bursts of laughter.

At length, to Mrs. Sewell's great delight, who had been very impatient for the commencement, the door of the great saloon was thrown open, and Michael entered leading in Maria, followed by Wyvill doing the like to Rosalind, all habited as well as their means would admit, in the costume of a by-gone age. The dresses it must be allowed were more fanciful than correct, but the wearers looked well; and if the features of Rosalind and Rupert

were less perfect in form than those of Michael and his fair lady, they were far more intelligent and expressive; and there was a glow of life and energy in both that promised spirited acting.

The four advanced to the centre of the room, and the gentlemen in a brief, but tolerably sustained conversation, gave the spectators to understand that each had a liking for his friend's sister; and that it was their purpose to make cross matches as soon as possible, and become brothers-in-law, as in affection. The cruel Baron Von Rudheim having been refused by the Lady Bertha, represented by Rosalind, had attacked and destroyed through treachery the castles of her brother, Baron Von Nieben, and her betrothed Count Wilhelm Von Ottenberg, the latter represented by Wyvill; and compelled them and their sisters to seek safety in flight and subsequent obscurity. Then followed assertions from the gentlemen of their present happiness, though residing in humble cottages,

and anticipations of still greater bliss from a union with their fair enslavers, the latter principally expatiated on by Michael, Rosalind having protested, though in vain, against the cross matches, or any introduction of a warmer sentiment than friendship.

The gentlemen looked very tender—the ladies very blushing and proper—and the whole was a scene of perfect felicity, but—

"As they were at glee, and a merry making,"

shrouded figures crept stealthily near—then came a signal whistle, and several fierce-looking men—all the males that could be mustered and made to appear as ferocious as possible—rushed in, it was to be supposed from a neighbouring wood, and seized the happy quartett. The lovers of course would have made a desperate resistance, but, being unarmed and taken by surprise, were soon overpowered by numbers, and the whole party late so joyous, after having their hands bound with cords and

handkerchiefs, were carried off by their hard-hearted assailants, retainers of the ruthless Baron Von Rudheim.

In the second scene, the captives and their captors were supposed to be resting on their way to the castle of Rudhiem. The prisoners were together, seated on the ground and looking very miserable, whilst the guards, having drained the wine cup more often than was prudent, were reclining around—all sleeping—some snoring, particularly Richard Weston, whose snores, like those of the giant of old might have called down a rock on his head had there been any above it. Presently the miserable captives began to look less miserable, and when the most wakeful of their guards gave, like his companions, assurance of his slumbering, a gleam of hope came into their heavy eyes, and Rosalind, who appeared to have been less firmly bound than the others, freeing her own hands, proceeded with silent haste to free the hands of her friends. One by one they glided

gently past their unwatchful guards, and had undiscovered reached the last, when the whole band, roused by Michael's stumbling, starting up, rushed with fierce looks upon their captives, who after a short resistance were again nearly secured, when the singing of peasants was heard in the distance, and one or two made their appearance at the door, who by looking back, and making signs, conveyed the idea that there were many standing near. To these imagined many Rupert Wyvill addressed himself, calling on them to rescue his companions, and throw off the galling yoke of the cruel Baron, alike his oppressor and theirs. The performers were so few, though the usual family party, as we have already said, was encreased by other guests, that the peasants were obliged to remain in the ante-room to conceal the scantiness of their number, but a faint cheer was occasionally heard, mixed with bustling and scuffling under the direction of Mr. Adnam. Had the scene been real, the

peasants numerous, and but one degree even above cowards, they would not only have released the speaker, but, electing him their chief, have followed him to freedom or to death. His very guards seemed struck with amazement at his impassioned appeal—his burst of fiery eloquence. Michael and Rosalind gazed upon him with admiring wonder, quite forgetful of the parts they were to act—fortunately this admiring wonder was not *outré*—whilst Mr. Adnam might be seen bending forward into the room only half restrained by Jemima Bailey, who pulled at his cloak, his little bright eyes glistening, rubbing his hands with boisterous delight, and once or twice clapping at some very striking sentence. A more touching, a more stirring call to freedom could scarcely have been conceived.

He prayed them by their regard for their homes and their hearths—for the sake of those whom they loved, as he loved her by his side, to march with him against their common

oppressor, and secure to themselves and their sons the rights of men—and of freemen. He spoke of their mothers and their sisters—he spoke of their maidens and young children; and then his voice had the touching softness of the eolian harp; but when he spoke of his foe, describing him as cruel and treacherous—true to none, but false to all—with the fierceness of the tiger, and the subtlety of the serpent—creeping to gain his end, when he durst not spring—the effect was startling;—though his hearers knew that the scene was fictitious, yet they involuntarily held their breath to listen, fearing to lose a word, as he stood before them, with his stately figure drawn up to its full height, his cloak flung back, his eyes flashing—his lip and nostril curling with the excitement of the moment, and the might of a powerful mind stamped strongly on every feature.

Could this be the usually silent, indolent, Rupert Wyvill? Were there not strong feel-

ings and strong passions hid under that calm exterior? All gazed upon him as we have said with wonder, but none more fixedly than Edred Cottrell, who was then enacting one of the guards; he not only gazed—he glared upon him, whilst his flushed cheek and kindling eye showed all that he was moved. There could be no doubt that Rupert's harangue had more of the raving of passion than the sober arguments of reason. The language was high sounding—some might have thought slightly tinged with bombast—perhaps purposely so—still none could have heard it untouched—none turn it at that moment into ridicule.

There was no hesitation—no affectation—no studied tropes or attitudes—his speech was as a rushing flood that would have its way; and when he ceased all drew their breaths, and there was a brief silence. It was the *beau-ideal* of acting, for it had all the seeming—all the force of nature.

Had the scene been real, as we said before,

he and his friends would have been rescued; but it was not real, so the peasants only cheered, instead of fighting, and Edred and his brother guards replacing his bonds with many threats, led the captives away.

At the opening of the third scene appeared Edred Cottrell alone, as the false and cruel Rudheim, and well did his Baron's dress become him, with his plumed cap and graceful cloak, though his attire, like that of the others, was after a fashion of his own. His brows were knit—his whole countenance wore the expression of vindictive wrath—never was a revengeful disposition better pourtrayed as he stood with one hand resting on his dagger's hilt, the other clenched, and raised in a threatening attitude, whilst his teeth were set as in rage and defiance.

There came a rustling, a clanking, and some indescribable noises without, and then an attendant entered to announce that the fugitive

lords and their sisters were prisoners—and in his power.

His sudden start—the gleam of vengeful joy that shot from his keen eye, and his hollow voice as he gave orders that they should be brought before him, were inimitable, and would have made the fortune of a tragic actor. Was it all acting? Nor was the look of triumphant malice and concentrated hate with which he gazed on his victims, particularly Rupert, less admirable.

The prisoners, who were in bonds, entered guarded by all the men that could be mustered to make a show, whilst the two Baileys stood at the door exhibiting only their heads adorned with tasselled caps, to induce the belief that all the baronial household was in attendance.

There was a silence of some moments, but not an unmeaning silence. Edred and Rupert gazed on each as rivals only gaze, but the captive blenched not, and there was that in

the curling of his lip that made the captor's eye flash fiercer as he spoke in bitter mockery. He scarcely noticed Michael or Maria, and Rosalind saw not how he looked on her, for her eyes were bent upon the ground.

"Welcome to our castle fair ladies and brave lords!—the first shall have fitting chambers—and the last a gorgeous pageant. Let the dungeons in the west tower be prepared for the ladies Bertha and Adelheid—and let the scaffold be got ready for the Lords of Nieben and Ottenburg," he added turning to an attendant.

So fearfully earnest was the tone, so resolute the look, that the startled attendant—Terry Weston—stood staring at the speaker instead of going to execute the order. Michael showed more wonder than defiance—Rosalind involuntarily uttered a faint cry, and Maria, positively frightened, shrieked outright, gaining thereby immortal credit for her natural acting, whilst the spectators felt a chill of alarm.

Rupert alone heard the words unmoved, and answered as one who felt neither surprise nor fear, giving back hatred for hatred.

"Do with me as you will, proud Baron; for myself I ask no favor; but let my death appease you. Let the sacrifice of one atone for our opposition to your will;—Nieben and these ladies have done you no wrong."

"The Baron is your friend—would be your brother;—one lady is your sister—the other your betrothed. You and the Baron die— the ladies await my further pleasure in confinement," answered Edred sternly. "Lead them away to death!" he added glaring upon Wyvill on whom all his anger seemed expended, as Michael left him to be spokesman.

"Mercy! Mercy!" cried Rosalind and Maria kneeling at his feet, though Rupert made a motion to restrain the former.

Maria's appeal was unheeded; to Rosalind were Edred's words and looks directed; and there was no pity in either.

"But late I knelt to you—and now you kneel to me! I prayed for love, and you returned me scorn!—you pray for mercy, and I do the like, mocking your agony!"

"I had no love to give," faltered the kneeling Rosalind.

"And you dare tell me this? Dare say your love is given to another?" he exclaimed, his hand seeking his dagger whilst a gust of rage swept across his features.

"No, no; I mean not that," said the trembling Rosalind as if overcome by fear, whilst a crimson flush spread over neck and brow. "I mean that the heart is not to be forced—but won. Give us life! give us freedom! and my gratitude—"

"I care naught for gratitude if barren. What fruit will it bring forth? Will it change hatred to affection?"

"Try!—free us and try!"

"Free us!—not all; I might free some, but one at least shall suffer."

"Then let that one be me," pleaded the supplicant.

"No, no, not you:—you live to become my bride."

"Never!" exclaimed Rosalind with an air as proud as his own.

"Never?" he repeated laying his hand on her arm, bending his fiery eyes upon her, and speaking in a whisper, which though low, was so distinct as to be heard by all. "Be wise, or your brother suffers."

Rosalind spoke not—her pride had passed—her firmness fled—her eyes sank beneath his, and she shook from head to foot.

"Wretch! this is the threat of a fiend!" almost shouted Wyvill in great excitement.

"Ha! say you so? those words have sealed your doom," returned Edred in a tone as excited. "Lead him to death!—No you are mine!—You rest with me as victor!" he added in a softer tone to Rosalind, as she made an effort to follow Michael and Rupert, who were

forced from the room by the attendants, Richard Weston being exceedingly active in his office.

"I defy your power," she replied, standing proudly erect before him, though her cheek was pale—and very pale.

"You forget that your brother's fate is in my hands," he whispered, in the same thrilling tone as before.

Her lips moved, but no sound was heard;—a pallid hue came round her mouth, and she needed the support of Edred's arm as he led her from the room amid the plaudits of the audience, who considered this show of faintness as the crowning glory of her performance.

As for poor Maria, so little attention was paid to her that she was obliged to walk off by herself; but as she did so with a frightened air the effect of the *dénouement* was not marred by the circumstance.

"Capital acting, I call that!" cried Mr.

Adnam, running back in his guard's dress, and rubbing his hands with glee.

"Too capital! too tragic! We want something merry," said Mr. Bailey.

"You shall have something merry in a minute; I will see about it directly. But I forgot," he added returning after he had reached the door, and standing in the centre of the room with a theatrical air. "Dear me!" scratching his head, "I was to have spoken a sort of prologue—no epilogue; and there I have quite forgotten it, so must make one out of my own head:—here goes!

'So ladies and gentlemen here ends our pretty play,
We wish you health and happiness, and this is all I say.'

Ay, I dont mind your laughing a bit," he continued as he departed, greeted with shouts of mirth, from those within the room, and those without. "You cannot have any difficulty in finding out the word I guess; and there are

few managers who can boast a better company, I calculate. You shall have comedy now."

"I am sure I hope so; there was a something in all this that I did not comprehend. I felt my heart jump into my mouth; and it was not like acting," remarked Mrs. Bailey, who had a greater taste for the ludicrous than the sublime.

"It was not like acting," agreed Mrs. Denham, who had looked and listened most attentively.

"But what is the sense of it? I do not understand it," said Mr. Bailey, who understood nothing but what was connected with the money market.

"It is called acting a charade." replied his good-natured neighhour Mr. Broderick; "representing parts of a word first—and then the whole, just as you read in written charades—my first is this—my second is that—my whole is something else."

"Oh! then I suppose it had something to do with Newgate, as there were prisoners; but

they were in odd dresses, and it was a queer sort of a judge without a wig," observed Mr. Bailey, who had been asleep during part of the representation.

"More to do with the Old Bailey," said Edred Cottrell gaily, who having entered the room for his letters had caught the comment.

"What a change! what a contrast," remarked Mr. Broderick when the laugh caused by Edred's reply had died away, and he had left the apartment. "Who could recognise in that volatile young man, who seems all fun, frolic, and good-nature, the cruel and revengeful tyrant of five minutes since? It is inexplicable to me—I cannot understand it. There must be more in him than I imagined."

"More good, or more evil do you mean?" asked Mrs. Denham.

"More mind; whether good or evil I cannot pretend to say."

"But what was the word? I do not comprehend it now," said Mr. Bailey.

"Tyrant," replied his good-natured explainer "The first part was tie—Did not you see that all their hands were tied?"

"I thought that was prisoner."

"Then the second was rant—Did not you hear Mr. Wyvill rant, if it is not a shame to call such a burst of eloquence ranting?"

"I thought he was a radical trying to kick up a row in the money market, and a run on the banks."

"Then the third scene was the whole—tyrant, which was admirably enacted by Mr. Cottrell."

"I took him for a judge trying those radical chaps. I should never have made it out if you had not been kind enough to explain it;—such things are not in my way."

"No, there is nothing of that sort on change," observed Mr. Broderick.

"It would be a change for the worse if there were; and that is paying off Mr. Cottrell for

his Old Bailey, I reckon," returned the monied man, chuckling at his fancied wit.

"It is a singular coincidence, but the first time I ever saw Miss Trevor's mother was at the representation of 'Timour the Tartar,' or some such piece; and now here is her daughter acting in a charade," observed Mrs. Sewell.

Mrs. Denham bent lower over her work, for even she, though not given to smiles, could not always forbear one at the singular want of coincidence in some of her old friend's singular coincidences.

"Maria looked very beautiful kneeling at Edred's feet, and acted admirably. Do not you think so, Mrs. Denham?" asked Mrs. Weston.

"Yes, her part was judiciously selected, and she looked lovely and frightened just at the proper time."

Mrs. Weston was not quite sure that she was satisfied with this praise, which some might have considered meagre, but as her hostess was not a person to be worried into thinking or

saying anything contrary to her inclination, she was prudent enough not to press her further.

"I have seen Maria look as well before; but I never saw Rosalind so lovely—no that is not the word—so striking—so different from any one else," observed Mrs. Sewell, who could not resist the temptation to praise her favorite, notwithstanding all that favorite's positive prohibitions on the subject.

"Yes, she was startling whether entreating or defying. I could no more have withstood her pleading, than I could have borne her look of contempt and defiance without shrinking," said Mr. Broderick.

"That is exactly what I felt," cried Mrs. Sewell, delighted to hear her young pet lauded. "She put me in mind of Miss O'Neil; and it is a singular coincidence that the last time I saw that lady perform was in the character of Juliet; and the farce was, 'Love laughs at Locksmiths.'"

Mr. Broderick puzzled himself to discover the singular coincidence in this circumstance, and then giving up the task in despair, remarked; "I should not think Miss Trevor was formed to enact Juliet. She would not become enamoured at first sight, or love so simply, so devotedly I might add. She has more of the daring and quick wit of her namesake. And yet I should not pretend to give an opinion on her powers and character after the late display, having before set her down as merely a merry, high spirited girl, receiving homage as her due, without being touched or flattered by it."

"You do not know Rosalind Trevor; she is the most affectionate of human beings to those whom she really regards, and would lay down her life to serve them; and in the midst of her highest spirits and teasing, if she does but fancy that she has vexed you, she will change in an instant, and be gentle and loving as a little child, winning you back to good humour again

with her pretty caresses, and fondling ways," said Mrs. Sewell warmly.

"Indeed! I judged of her principally from her encounters with Mr. Wyvill, or her merry raillery with Mr. Cottrell; and gave her credit for more mind than heart—more wit than affection."

"Then you did not judge her fairly, Mr. Broderick; she is ever ready for a jest, or a merry tilt, as she calls it, with those for whom she cares little; but see her at home with those she loves, and she is the light and life of the house, as though her whole being were wrapt up in those about her."

"You are growing quite poetical, Mrs. Sewell, I wish I could construct such pretty sentences," remarked Mrs. Weston jealous of Rosalind's praise.

"I only say what her father says; and see how her brother dotes on her," replied Mrs. Sewell colouring, and offended at the imputa-

tion of talking poetically, a sin in some eyes as heinous as talking treasonably.

Yet what would life be without its poetry? A barren waste—an arid desert—or worse, a money market!

"It may be as you say. Miss Trevor is rather pretty, but deficient in that exquisite polish only acquired by mixing in the highest society; and she may be very affectionate as you assert, or very good-natured as my dear charitable Maria declares; but the fact is, I do not understand her, and should not apply the term good-natured to her;—should you Mrs. Denham?

"Most certainly not," replied that lady emphatically.

"I thought our opinions were the same," exclaimed Mrs. Weston triumphantly, "I am sure you will agree with me too, that there was something very singular in her acting—quite different from other people."

"Very singular," replied Mrs. Denham.

"And Rupert Wyvill's was as singular—as much out of the common way;—it was not like acting it made one tremble," continued Mrs. Weston, purposely leaving Edred and Michael out of the critique thinking as both stood some chance of becoming Mrs. Denham's heir, and then good matches for her daughter, it might be as well not to abuse them.

"It was not like acting," again replied Mrs. Denham.

"I do not comprehend Mr. Wyvill any more than Miss Trevor—Do you my dear Mrs. Denham?"

"No."

"Well I am sure Edred Cottrell's acting was as little like play as either of the others," remarked Mrs. Sewell pettishly.

"It was if possible still more like reality," said Mrs. Denham.

"It would have been different if they had given Terry or Richard one of the important

parts," observed the mother with a mother's vanity.

"Very different," cried several, and the mother never guessed the reason of this ready acquiescence.

Terry and Richard Weston act as Wyvill and Cottrell had done! An idiot could not have entertained such an idea.

"Here comes Richard, so now we shall be amused," said Mrs. Weston.

"And Elizabeth with him," cried Mrs. Bailey.

CHAPTER III.

"WHAT fool's part is Elizabeth going to play?" grumbled Mr. Bailey, rubbing his eyes to keep them open.

It was a useful part assigned to Miss Bailey, neither more or less than that of a housekeeper, too young and smart to have found favor in the eyes of sober old fashioned people, but well enough for the occasion, whilst her talent for buying cheap, was proved by her chaffering for mats with Richard, who bore two slung

over his shoulder,which, after some gossipping, he agreed to sell a bargain. The money being paid, the mats were laid down, and the seller departed. Then came a loud ringing and knocking, and immediately entered the whole *corps dramatique,* as if just returned from a country walk, bringing back half the mould from the fields, and all the dirt from the roads over which they had passed.

The new purchases were put in instant requisition. Such shuffling and scraping! and wiping! was never seen before. The "Gitting up stairs and playing on the violin," at Jim Crow's *soirée dansante* was nothing to it. Elizabeth, not to lose her share in the scuffling and shuffling, throwing on a cloak and bonnet, joined the walking party, and performed most naturally, though not more so than Richard and others; till the mirth of the performers grew so boisterous, that they were fain to retire after a splendid parting scuffle, leaving the audience convulsed with laughter.

"Well, that is rather funny, though I do not know what they mean; and Elizabeth did not play the housekeeper badly. What is the word now?" asked Mr. Bailey.

"You must wait for the second part—one can rarely tell from the first."

"I hope they will not keep us long then. Oh, no! here they come—one and all strutting, and chattering, and looking as odd as odd can be."

Mr. Bailey was right, they did look odd, for every one appeared crooked in dress or person—not one was entirely straight. Some had a hump on one shoulder—some on the other:—one had a shawl with the corner that should have been behind hanging nearly before—another had a long scarf with one end up to the throat, the other touching the ground. Hats and bonnets were put on most fantastically askew, and even the features of most were contorted, so that, if the straight is the line of morality, as some assert, never was

there a more immoral crew than the set who now poured into the drawing room at Denham Park, all with difficulty restraining their mirth at the strange figures of their companions, never considering that they themselves were quite as ridiculous. "*Ainsi va le monde.*"

But if the appearance of the actors was ludicrous when silent, it was doubly so when they began to talk all at once in discordant and unnatural voices, caused by the twisting of their mouths into every possible shape, to which some added the peculiarly attractive accomplishment of squinting; and in this none exceeded Edred, who, whilst conversing with Rosalind, contrived to draw up his mouth on one side, and his eyes on the other, and even to give his nose an oblique appearance, till his countenance became so irresistibly odd and comic, that neither the performers nor the audience could retain their gravity, and the former made their exit as before, amid peals of applauding laughter.

"That is good! very good!" exclaimed Mr. Bailey, looking all alive. "I have found it out now; they mean it for Mat Crook, the old miser upon change, who picks up the orange peel in the streets to dry and burn they say, and would cheat his own wife, if he had ever been so extravagant as to take one, out of a farthing. That is very good! it serves him right! He made me pay twopence more than my share for coach hire once. Serves him right, an old miser!"

"I should doubt if the young people had ever heard of your friend on change," observed Mr. Broderick with a smile at the narrow-minded merchant's train of thought, and his vexation at having been obliged to pay twopence more than his share.

"Oh! every one has heard of Mat Crook."

"Every one on change perhaps."

"And who is not on change? But bless me, here they come again—at least young Cottrell."

"Yes, looking like a money maker, and money lender too," added Mr. Broderick as Edred appeared with an antique wig and thread bare coat, a stooping figure, and a look of grasping care, for he seemed capable of compelling his features to wear any expression he desired.

He tottered under the weight of a box—really a strong box, made to contain plate and borrowed from the butler—which he placed carefully upon the table, and then, closing the door, looked into every corner and under the chairs and sofas as if to be certain that no one was concealed in the apartment. Then groping in his bosom, he pulled out a key, with which he unlocked the box, gazing on what it contained with gloating eyes; and after a while, not satisfied with the delight of beholding, he proceeded to handle his treasure.

Two silver goblets were produced and weighed in the hand—then came the chinking of coins, followed by a chuckling laugh that

spoke the miser's joy; after which he employed himself in reckoning up his wealth, referring to some paper before him to prove that he had lost nothing by carelessness or robbery. Hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, were counted up—his chuckling growing louder and louder as he proceeded—when a knocking was heard at the door—not a quiet modest knock; but a loud, reckless rap, rap, rap, rap-rap-rap-a rea! as if one one of no sober mind desired admittance.

The miser started in surprise and terror, holding a coin suspended in his hand; but as the rapping was repeated more recklessly even than before, with loud calls for admission, he thrust the goblets, coin, and papers, back into the box with almost frenzied anxiety; locked and doubled locked it, then put it under the table, nearly dragging off the cloth to throw it over his treasure. This done, with some trepidation which he endeavoured to conceal under a grave and sober demeanour, he approached

the door, and demanded the name and purpose of him who knocked so furiously.

"Sir Volatile Fashion to be sure! Come let me in old Saveall," cried the impetuous visitor.

The timid, reluctant miser demurred, but in vain; for the eager applicant, bursting open the door by which he had nearly over turned his host, forced his way into the apartment, and the audience were not a little surprised to discover in the fashionable spendthrift and dandy, with his bouquet, cane and eye glass, and his hair arranged with a jaunty, rakish, air the usually quiet, and some said dignified Rupert Wyvill. It was not only a striking, but, for the time being, a complete metamorphosis; quite as complete as Edred's into the careful, anxious, miser. The one seemed filled with the spirit of folly and extravagance—the other with the spirit of gravity and saving. The disguise too was maintained with admirable skill; and the whole was in excellent keeping, though a little exaggerated.—Sir Volatile came

to borrow a thousand pounds—a paltry sum in his estimation, an enormous one in that of Mr. Saveall, who held up his hands, and opened his eyes in terror and amazement, denying that he was in possession of so large a sum; but asking, supposing he were, what security could be given by the man of fashion.

His bill—his note of hand—his word of honor. He had no effects—no landed property—but large expectations from an old uncle—an older aunt; and a young cousin, dying of consumption, and St. John Long."

But Saveall's poverty, disgust and terror increased a thousand fold.

"People said he was rich, but it was all a mistake—he had no gold—no notes—not more than five shillings in the house; and even half of that he owed to his butcher. He had nothing to live upon but a very, very small annuity, which he had purchased with his very limited gains; and besides, it was sinful to be extravagant—he had never been so

even in his youth; and he could not encourage extravagance in another;—on his conscience he could not. The young men of the present day were such spendthrifts—it was the crime of the age—they should learn to save—but his lecture on the sin of spending and the duty of saving was cut short by the impatience of Sir Volatile, who, calling his speech a fudge, insisted that there was a large sum of money in the house, and that a thousand pounds he could and would have.

"Not a pound! not a shilling! not a sixpence, Sir Volatile! it is all a mistake! I am a beggar—an absolute beggar!" cried Saveall vehemently, unconsciously in his terror, as the actor made it appear, handling the key in his bosom, and glancing at the box containing his treasure.

"Ha! a key. And what is under the cloth old boy? A box! a strong box! a money chest, as I live!" shouted the would be borrower in triumph.

"No—no—Sir Volatile—not a strong box—

not a money chest—I have no gold;—no gold at all! Don't touch it, dear sir! don't touch it, —you will hurt it," cried the miser, clutching at the young dandy with a ludicrous expression of fear and anxiety.

"Hurt it! Why what does it contain, old Saveall? Eh?" questioned Sir Volatile laughing at the miser's nervous alarm yet still retaining his hold of the box, "come, come, quick. What is it?"

"A—a—a ra rab—bit," stammered the frightened usurer.

"A rabbit!" exclaimed Sir Volatile with the utmost incredulity. "What an expense! you will have to pay three farthings a week for a cabbage—three pence a month. How could you think of such an extravagance? You ought to save not spend. Besides, you will smother the poor animal, keeping it shut up in the box, and that would be a dead loss. Let us raise the lid and give it some air."

"No! no! no!—now don't think of it, Sir

Volatile! It is so wild—we shall never be able to catch it again," pleaded the miser his ludicrousterror increasing.

"I warrant you—I will catch it. Come give us the key, or I shall break open the lid; I could not in conscience let the poor animal be smothered."

"Now don't, dear Sir Volatile—now don't. You could not catch it again—I am sure you could not—it would run away."

"No fear of that, you keep your doors so close. If it should run up the chimney, I will run after it. Come open the box—I will see the contents."

"Now, dear, good, prudent, Sir Volatile, what can put such a fancy into your head? You have seen a thousand rabbits before," said the miser coaxingly.

"Yes, Saveall, and I should not see one more if I looked into this box. I tell you what, old curmudgeon, you are trying to deceive me—and you are given to deceiving;—you are

telling lies, and you are given to telling lies,' —answered Sir Volatile with a fiery earnestness at variance with his late reckless levity. "Look you to it! I am neither as simple, nor as patient as you deem me."

There was a moment's pause—the flashing eyes of the miser and the spendthrift met, and it seemed doubtful whether the latter would not resent the accusation with an indignant energy, not to be expected from his former pusillanimity; but whilst he appeared debating how to act, Sir Volatile resumed his former tone, and Saveall was again the frightened miser.

"You dare not deny the charge;—there is no rabbit there."

"Well, well, Sir Volatile—There is not—there I own it."

"Then why did you say that there was?"

"You are so violent—you flurry me so, Sir Volatile, that I—I—I don't know what I say. It is not a rabbit—it—it is papers."

"Papers! Ah, bank notes! I thought so."

"No, no, Sir Volatile; not notes—not notes; —letters—old letters from my great aunt Tabitha to her niece."

"Very good, Saveall! we will publish them. —we will make money of them. You shall give me a thousand pounds for editing them with notes. These old letters are all the rage now. Give us the key, and let us have a look at them."

"Now, Sir Volatile—now don't be so violent! they must not be published—there are personalities—gross personalities in them."

"The very thing Saveall, we shall make thousands more—it is the taste of the day, among the higher classes, and thence descending to the lower. Only write personalities—the grosser the more profitable—and you are sure to become famous and rich. Genius may starve —plain sense be pinched—but scandal may ride in its coach and six. What publisher shall we have? The most fashionable of course."

"I could not, Sir Volatile—I could not in conscience. What would my great aunt Tabitha say if she were alive?"

"Pocket the money and laugh at the critics, as others have done, who have slandered their dearest friends and nearest connections. She would not be more starch I suppose than some of the present day."

"She was a very moral and conscientious person, Sir Volatile."

"So are those of the present day—at least they say so; but it is a duty to expose the errors of their foes personal and political, and those foes having been formerly their dearest friends or connections only renders the duty more imperative—the scandal more piquant. We shall have ten editions at the least, if the scandal should only prove sufficiently false and bitter. Let me look at the letters;—I will not stir without a sight of them."

"You cannot indeed, Sir Volatile! they are family papers."

"Family falsehoods—Come give me the key."

"I cannot indeed!"

"Very well then, I shall carry them off to my lodging and look over them by myself;" and putting the old miser aside with a sudden motion, Sir Volatile seized the box and rushed out of the room, followed by the frightened Saveall, who hurried after him with unsteady steps, calling—stop thief and police with all his might.

"That is Mat Crook! I am sure it is Mat Crook!" exclaimed Mr. Bailey, when his laughter had subsided. "That is Mat to the life!"

"It may be; and yet I doubt the correctness of your conjecture," answered Mr. Broderick.

"Then what can it be?—for it is all over now?"

"I doubt that too, as Mr. Adnam has recited no epilogue."

"But what can you make out except Mat Crook?"

"It may be wry, instead of crook—money

instead of miser—thus mat-ri-mony; nay it must be so, for here comes the closing scene," replied Mr. Broderick, as Miss Bailey entered the room with all the airs of a pert abigail, which suited her well, bearing a cushion and shawl, which she arranged on the sofa, intimating, whilst she did so, that her mistress was rather given to fashion and fancies. The couch was scarcely arranged when Rosalind appeared with a languid step, arrayed in a handsome cape and cap, belonging to Mrs. Weston, and carrying in her arms Mrs. Denham's old fat spaniel, dressed up with ribbons round his neck and feet, according to the newest fashion among ladies' lapdogs. Ranger, who for the nonce, was christened Fidelle, being great friends with Rosalind, as all dogs were, allowed himself to be carried and caressed with good tempered submission; but his flaming redbows and unlapdog size made him a fitting subject for mirth, whilst Rosalind's affect-

ed petting formed an admirable caricature of foolish favoritism.

"That will do, Kitson; now give me the last fashionable novel, where there is no character under an honourable, and they always dine off plate," said Rosalind, settling herself and Fidelle among the cushions with a die away air. "And Kitson."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Mind they don't let in any of Mr. Glanville's horrid friends from the country, they are so boisterous, and have such high colours. They may admit Colonel Lorimer of the Guards; and if Mr. Glanville should come home, say I have a headach, and must not be disturbed; my husband always talks so loud—and his boots always creak—and he uses such horrid scents."

"Yes, ma'am."

"And be sure tell my page to invite the lapdogs as I told him, to dine here on tuesday. It is an age since Fidelle has had a dinner

party; and desire the housekeeper to provide a proper table: there must be chicken, and sweet bread, and cream. And mind, Fidelle must have fresh ribbons, and wear his chain; and be sure Adelbert does not invite Mrs. Tilney's poodle—the animal eats liver—a horrid creature! Fidelle must drop the acquaintance; he is too delicate to associate with such coarse feeders. They must have clean table cloths and napkins—they were not clean at Mrs. Tilney's when he dined there—and the best china; and the butler and footman must both attend."

"Yes, ma'am. Any thing more?"

"No, Kitson; but I hate the trouble of giving orders twice, so be very particular. I shall wear the silver gauze at Lady Dalrymple's to-night."

"Yes ma'am," and away went the airified abigail, leaving her mistress engaged with the fashionable novel.

But she had not glanced over three lines, ere

her studies were disturbed by the approach of Edred Cottrell, as her husband, who entered the room with considerable brusqueness, a paper in his hand, and a frown upon his brow.

"I wish, my dear, you would learn to modulate your movements—you have startled poor dear Fidelle, who is sadly nervous; I think I must take him to Brighton for sea air."

"I wish you would think less of your lapdog and more of your husband, my love."

"Think for you my dear? I thought you said the other day that I had no right to think for you."

"Think of me—I can think for myself; and I wish you would be a little more civil to my friends. I hear you said—not at home—to the Dobsons."

"Yes, my dear; I have not nerves for your country friends—they are so cordial—so boisterous."

"They are very worthy people."

"I daresay, my dear—your country persons

always are; but I hate worthy people—they are sure to be so tiresome."

"Yes; you prefer popinjays and scented puppies—Lorimers and Courtneys; but I warn you, the time may come when you will be glad of the friendly notice of my worthy country neighbours."

"Are you going to stand for the county, my dear? If so, I will try and play civil, and shake hands as they do. It would be so nice to have all my letters franked."

"No, madam; at your present rate of extravagance I shall soon cease to have sufficient land for a qualification. Here is a bill from Madame Maradan Carson."

"Is there, my dear? I thought she only sent in her bills at Christmas; but I suppose she stands in need of money."

"And so do I, madam."

"Ah, you are always wanting money, my dear; and never have sixpence to give me."

"How can I, madam, when you run up such bills."

"If you gave me money I could pay my bills myself."

"Give you money, madam; where do you suppose I am to get it?"

"Where you got the three hundred pounds for your new hunter, and the fifty for your hack, and the seventy for your cab horse."

"Nonsense, madam! they were all bargains; but here is four hundred pounds for dresses and millinery in one year."

"Dear me, how cheap! What a delight of a woman not to charge more."

"Charge more, madam! What moderate fortune can stand such lavish expenditure?"

"Lavish expenditure, my dear! Surely you would spend as much on your wife as on your stable."

"Is that all you can say in your defence, madam?"

"Defence, my dear! I need no defence."

"No defence, madam! do you mean to out-face me then?"

"No, my dear, I have no hope of doing that."

"Do you admit the correctness of this bill?" questioned the gentleman angrily, throwing the paper towards his lady.

"I never admit any thing, or any body likely to prove troublesome, my dear. I dare say it is all right, but you can ask Kitson before you pay it."

"Pay it! if I do, madam, this is the last bill of the sort I ever will pay."

"Then am I to stay at home, my dear, and let the world know that it is because you deny me the dresses fitting my station?"

"It might be as well for all if I did, madam. As it is, you are out every evening—gadding here—and gadding there—never in your own house."

"I go to look after you, my dear;—at home, I rarely see you."

"A plausible excuse, madam; but it won't do. I insist on your staying more at home."

"Insist, my dear?"

"Yes, insist, madam. Don't call me, my dear, whilst you are doing all you can to provoke me. Write an excuse to Lady Dalrymple for to-night—I dislike that woman."

"Certainly, since you wish it. I will tell my page to write directly, and say, disliking her ladyship, you do not choose me to attend her party; and have decided on supplying me with no more millinery, as you require all your money for horses and French wines, racing and betting."

"Beware, madam, how you provoke me! Here is scented paper—here a gold pen—write a proper note;—a woman is never at a loss for a good excuse."

"Pardon me, but there you are wrong; for

we have no legitimate excuse, and that I consider one of the greatest hardships of our sex. We cannot plead business—or a call of the house—or say that we have been at our club. I wish they would establish clubs for ladies, they would be so very convenient; and then we should live so economically too, for you maintain that it is much cheaper to dine at your club than your home."

"It is well, madam! I understand your taunt, and admire your calmness."

"Then I wish you would copy it, my dear; for you shake my nerves, playing the devil's tattoo, and looking so grim."

"Grim! Is it not enough to make one look grim?"

"Pray do not halloo so, my dear, it goes through my head; and see—you have disturbed poor Fidelle; and he had scarcely any sleep last night: I really must call in Sir Henry Halford."

"Do not provoke me, madam. Remember

you have vowed to love, honor, and obey."

"And you, to love and cherish me, and with all your worldly goods to endow. If we come to vows—let us keep them alike."

"This is too much, madam! to be ruined, and taunted too by my wife."

"Ruined?"

"Yes; ruined, madam! I do not know where to turn for a shilling."

"You should lay that on your horses and racing, and perhaps gambling, and not on your wife, on whom you have expended little. That bill is for two years and a half, as you might see if not blinded by passion."

"Passion, madam! I am as calm as a mill pond. Still harping on my horses. Is your husband to have nothing like other men of his station?"

"Is your wife to have nothing like other women of her station?"

"There was a time when my wife found her

happiness in her husband, instead of in extravagance and dissipation."

"There was a time, when my husband found his happiness in his wife, instead of in horses and clubs."

"You admit the truth of my charge, madam, by that remark; you no longer love your husband."

"My husband no longer loves me. When the lamp is not supplied with oil the flame goes out."

"Then if that is the case, madam, we had better part," exclaimed the husband furiously.

"Just as you please, my dear, I never contradict you," replied the lady calmly.

"I will speak to your brother on the subject."

"You had better speak to my uncles, who were trustees to the settlement."

"I comprehend your meaning, madam; you would say that you brought me a fortune. You shall have it back, madam—every far-

thing," cried the incensed husband, stamping with passion. "Only let us part, madam."

"Certainly, sir!"

"Directly, madam!"

"This instant, sir."

"And mind, madam; I shall not be moved by tears or entreaties."

"Nor I by prayers and vows," answered the lady, sweeping past him in a stately flurry.

"Madam, you are enough to put a saint in a passion."

"But you, being only a sinner, have no right to be in a rage."

"Rage, madam! I am as cool as a cucumber, and only desire your instant departure."

"Is that it? Here I go—you will be coaxing me to be friends again within the week," said the lady, with a bewitching smile, turning round as she reached the door. "But it won't do," she added with a look half playful, half spiteful, shaking her head, and patting her pretty little foot on the ground. "I am not

to be moved by tears or entreaties," she concluded as she quitted the room, leaving poor Ranger to waddle to his mistress and exhibit his finery.

"She takes me at my word! Heartless woman!—provoking creature!—not a tear—so ready to go! Ha! she is in hysterics—her coldness was only assumed to torment me—I must fly to soothe her!" cried the relenting gentleman, following the tormenting lady, and thus closing the charade.

Rosalind was laughing not crying, and the audience heard her say in reply, as it appeared, to some observation of 'The Provoked Husband's:'—

"Lavish expenditure! heartless woman! &c. &c. Thank goodness! cousin Edred, that I am not really your wife."

"You may go further and fare worse," replied her cousin with a laugh that sounded forced and unnatural.

"In spite of you and Father O'Leary, I will

not submit to purgatory, for fear of enduring a 'worser pain,' answered Rosalind gaily.

"That is if you can avoid it, fair coz."

"Yes, yes, Mr. Broderick, you are right; that is matrimony sure enough. That is always the way with the women, provoking men with their taunting and extravagance, and grudging a poor fellow a quiet corner at his club out of the reach of their tongues," observed Mr. Bailey.

"La! my dear, I am sure I am not extravagant and taunting; and as for your club, you may be at that as much as you like; I shall never say a word against it," replied his good-natured wife.

"No, my dear; as long as you have your own way, and plenty of money, you do not care what becomes of me."

"The charade is concluded—we must not have two last scenes," said Mr. Broderick with a smile, dreading a matrimonial dispute, "and here comes Mr. Adnam."

"Ladies and gentlemen," began Mr. Adnam, assuming a theatrical, managerial air, "I beg to thank you in the names of myself and company for the favor and approbation with which you have deigned to honor our poor performances; and to annonnce that some new and highly interesting pieces are in preparation for the next ensuing wet day, when we hope again to be honored by your applause. And so ladies and gentlemen wishing you all health and happiness, I take my leave," concluded Mr. Adnam, sweeping the floor with his hat, according to the most approved fashion.

"Come, Bailey, let us give the manager a clap or two," cried Mr. Broderick, suiting the act to the word, till the ladies put their hands to their ears; Mr. Adnam bowing, smiling, and rubbing his hands all the time, to the great amusement of the performers, who crowded into the room to witness the fun.

"A capital company you have, Adnam," said

Mr. Broderick; "no better out of London—scarcely in."

"Why, yes; I think I have cause to be proud of my company. Not but what they were a little obstreperous, insisting on having their own way in some things."

"Indeed! Who was the instigator of this rebellion?"

"I think Miss Trevor was the most turbulent."

"Yes, Rosalind was a rank rebel. Would you believe it, Mrs. Denham, she wanted to have no love in the first charade, as if any tale could go down without a little of *La belle passion;* and then when we overruled her in this, she stood out that I should be her lover. As if I was going to make pretty speeches to my sister," said Michael laughing, and laughing the more at Rosalind's blushes.

"The charade would have gone off just as well, if not better, with only hatred and avarice

as the moving passions," observed Rosalind in reply.

"I thought hatred had been one of the moving passions as it was," remarked Mrs. Denham.

"Love, hatred, and jealousy, all combined," said Michael.

"But that was not Miss Trevor's only act of rebellion," cried Mr. Adnam, who maintained his character of manager by complaining of the disputes and opposition among his *corp dramatique.* "I wanted her to borrow money of Saveall for herself, or her brother, or somebody; but this she positively refused to do, persisting that it would make the scene too long. Then I wished her to take Wyvill for her husband, thinking as they were always sparring, what a capital pair they would make; but no—she offered a thousand objections; and as he did not seem to fancy quarrelling with her any more than she did with him, I was obliged to give her to Cottrell, for fear she should play

sentimental out of spite, and spoil the keeping of the piece, which was to be all merry."

"You need not have feared Rosalind's playing sentimental, particularly with Mr. Wyvill; she is not given to that," said Mrs. Bailey.

"I do not know what she is given to, for I cannot make her out; only this I know—she is a capital actress. I could scarcely believe her emotion feigned when Cottrell threatened her brother," answered Mr. Adnam.

"It was the perfection of acting—I too could scarcely believe it fiction," observed Mr. Broderick. "But what is most astonishing to me, is, that your best performers have excelled in the representation of characters so different from their own."

"Ah! there is no knowing any body's real character, my dear sir. Now there is Wyvill—I thought I knew him formerly, but there is no making head or tail of him now."

"No scandal of me, if you please, Mr. Adnam," said Rupert, who was assisting Rosa-

lind in unadorning poor Ranger, who showed no taste for finery.

"Ah! well it is of no use to say anything about it, for if you take a crotchet into your head you will carry it out; and I believe your present crotchet is to be a fusty, musty, old bachelor; for you will not fall in love, all I can do; and as for Miss Trevor she is—"

"A very lively, good-tempered, agreeable girl," said Mrs. Bailey interrupting him.

"Which said resolution is carried nem con; and thus closes the session," cried Edred gaily, the dressing bell ringing at the moment.

"Stop a minute; in justice to Miss Trevor, I must have it understood that I insisted on her playing the tormenting wife, and saying, my dear, which is always so provoking when you are in a passion," said Mr. Adnam. "I say this, lest her admirable acting should injure her future prospects, by inducing a fear that she would not make a good wife, which I am sure she would."

"Thank you, Mr. Adnam, for your good word, and care for my future prospects," replied Rosalind with a smile. "But who takes me, must take me at his peril," she added, turning aside, by which her playful glance encountered Rupert's.

A richer bloom came on the cheek of each.

The continued rain prevented an evening stroll, but Edred made himself so agreeable and amusing, though he never quitted Miss Trevor's side, that time hung heavy with few.

Mr. Adnam engaged Wyvill, whether he would or no, in drawing out a plan for the new house, which he had talked of building for the last twenty years, sometimes appealing to Rosalind, who aided Mrs. Sewell in finishing the Mameluke to whom she had already given the black eyes, which might account for an occasional short answer and impatient look whilst her cousin rattled on. The rest of the party were variously employed.

CHAPTER IV.

"THANK you, Mr. Wyvill, for bringing my German wool from C. it was so kind of you," said Miss Bailey on the following day after the removal of the cloth, glad of an opportunity of informing those assembled that he had been employed as her carrier.

"You at C.—Wyvill! I would have sworn to having seen you and your horse at Drinkbourne," exclaimed Edred Cottrell in amazement. "It must have been your fetch then, so make your will at once."

"I saw Wyvill returning by the Drinkbourne road," chimed in Richard Weston.

"Yet I can answer for his having been at C. for he brought me a letter from the bank," said Mr. Bailey.

"You never could have thought Drinkbourne the nearest way home from C., for it lies in the contrary direction;—there—just as those two glasses. This is C.—and that is Drinkbourne—and that plate is Denham. It is six miles at least out of your road," said Mr. Adnam, who had Patterson and Cary by heart. "Perhaps you struck into the road at the three elms, that you might go and see the horse we were talking of the other day."

"I should say that I saw Wyvill's steed standing at the gate of a pretty cottage in the outskirts of Drinkbourne," observed Edred.

"Is this true?" asked Mr. Adnam.

"Possibly. Having business at Drinkbourne, I came round that way," replied Rupert briefly, and, as some fancied, unwillingly.

"Round indeed!" said Mr. Adnam; "but you never think of distances."

"What business could you have at such a stupid place as Drinkbourne?" enquired Richard Weston in an impertinent tone, asking the question merely because he thought it would annoy Wyvill, whom he disliked, and thwarted when he could.

"Come, come, Richard, no troublesome questions. Do as you would be done by," said Edred with an appearance of friendly good humour.

"Ho! ho! so there is mischief in the wind," cried Richard triumphantly.

"I did not say that, but you should show more delicacy than to ask questions;—it is not always prudent to be communicative," answered Cottrell, winking to Richard, as if to keep him quiet, an act which only inflamed his curiosity and determined him to gratify that and his malice towards Wyvill, who, in spite of all

endeavours at self-command, showed considerable annoyance.

"Oh! a delicate affair is it. A pretty girl in the case I suppose—I begin to smell a rat," continued Richard in a tone of vulgar banter. "Come, tell us all about it, Wyvill."

"Hold your tongue, Richard—cannot you?" cried Edred sharply. "Wyvill is not one to kiss and tell."

"Kiss! Wheugh!--so there is kissing in the case."

"I did not say—that is I did not mean to say so, merely using an old adage. Hold your nonsense, Richard. See, how red and confused you have made Wyvill already."

"Merely an old adage? No, no, Cottrell, that won't do: you let the cat out of the bag without intending it. Come, Wyvill, don't look so silly, but own to the kiss, man. There is no such great harm in saluting a pretty girl; at least I should not think so, though I do not

know what Rosalind may say to it, for she is looking as grave as a judge, and nearly as red as yourself."

"I may well look grave at your vulgar jesting," answered Rosalind reprovingly.

"And you blush from the same cause I conclude, my decorous coz. I shall not stay my jesting for your rebuke, but will ferret out the truth, which Wyvill seems so reluctant to tell."

"Disinclined to encourage your impertinent curiosity you should rather say," observed Rupert haughtily. "I am master of my own movements, and not accountable for them to Mr. Richard Weston. I had business at Drinkbourne, and the weather being fine preferred riding round to execute it to day, instead of waiting till to-morrow."

"You are getting angry, Mr. Sobriety, and hoping to stop me by high sounding words; but that won't do, for I am resolved to get at the bottom of the whole affair, so you may as

well out with it at once. Rosalind cannot look graver than she does already, and I daresay will soon get over it, as she thinks all that you do is right."

"Does she?" exclaimed Rupert involuntarily, with a lightning glance at Rosalind who sat beside him: but she was looking down, and their eyes did not meet.

"Ha! ha! ha! What more mischief!—two strings to your bow," cried Richard, rejoicing in the confusion of Wyvill and Rosalind. "If you do not explain we shall all imagine worse than the truth."

"You may imagine what you please—I have nothing to explain," replied Rupert loftily.

"Then I shall imagine kneeling, and kissing, and love making."

"Then you will imagine a falsehood; there was no such thing," answered Rupert quickly.

"Cottrell said there was. Which am I to believe?"

"Cottrell did not say that there was either."

"But he insinuated all. Did not you Cottrell?

"I would rather not say any thing more about it, and am sorry, since Wyvill is so much annoyed, that I noticed his being at Drinkbourne."

"There Wyvill, he cannot deny having seen the kissing, and kneeling and love-making," persisted Richard.

"No one understands better than Mr. Cottrell the advantage of a judicious silence, conveying impressions which a full statement would overthrow," observed Rupert, provoked beyond prudence.

"Nay, Wyvill, if it comes to that, I must out with the truth to clear my character; and you must bear the blame of my speaking," cried Edred, kindling into anger, "I saw you sitting on a sofa beside a very pretty girl, one arm round her waist, and her head resting on your shoulder:—deny that if you can."

"Go on! What did you see next?" questioned Rupert sternly, his very lips turning white with his strong emotion.

"I saw no more. I am no spy, and concluding that my presence would be unwelcome retired."

"As you came, I conclude, with a stealthy step that could startle none. Why were you there?"

"That is soon, and, to a reasonable man, satisfactorily answered. Seeing your horse at the gate, I entered to propose our riding home together, and the door being open there was no need that I should knock. You would not have desired my stay I apprehend," added Edred with a smile peculiarly irritating to the person addressed, though he made no comment on it.

"Did you not hear as well as see?" asked Rupert with a look of keen anxiety.

"I heard the lady murmur—best and dearest."

"And no more?" questioned Rupert eagerly.

"No more. As I told you before, I retired on the instant, so your secret is safe."

There was a dead silence most of those present feeling and looking awkward; but no one so much so as Rupert himself, who read nothing flattering in the countenances of those around him.

"The lady had fainted," he said proudly.

"I do not pretend to give an opinion on that point," answered Edred to whom the remark appeared addressed, a lurking sneer belying his words.

"You do not intend to deny it I conclude. If so near as to hear her words, you must have remarked her faintness and pallid cheeks."

"Of course it was so, since you say it: but I must again decline giving any opinion on the subject, my observation having been so cursory."

"Your looks assert what your words dare not avow," observed Rupert sternly.

"I hope we are not all to be called to

account for our looks, if so there are few here I suspect, who would escape your censure," said Richard sneeringly.

It was true—Rupert read suspicion on the brows of all, awakened more by his own confusion than the hints of his enemies. The most charitable believed him guilty of something which he was ashamed to acknowledge, though what that something was varied according to the minds and moods of the guests. Rupert saw this and was wounded. Mrs. Denham looked severe—Rosalind pained and flushed—Mr. Adnam fidgety—whilst Richard Weston showed his malicious triumph in a mode to gall the most patient into fury.

"Guilty! guilty! no innocent man ever wore such a hang-dog look. Make a full confession, or we shall imagine something more heinous than a successful wooing. Who is the peerless damsel?"

"After what has passed I must in delicacy decline giving her name," said Rupert with

restraining dignity. "In supporting a fainting female I only did what common humanity required, and had Mr. Cottrell seen and heard more I should have stood acquitted in his eyes, at least: but the limits to his sight and hearing are ever fixed by prudence."

"Did you wish me to see and hear more?" questioned Edred emphatically.

"That very question convinces me that you did; but I neither ask nor expect justice at your hands."

"This is all nonsense, Wyvill. Why don't you own to kissing a pretty girl, if you did it, and there is an end? Many a man has done the like before, and I don't see who has a right to make a fuss about it," said Mr. Adnam after fidgeting for some time, unable to decide what course to follow.

"Heaven defend me from my friends! I can defend myself from my enemies," thought Rupert as he saw more than one smile caused

by his champion's odd method of getting him out of a scrape.

"I have nothing further to own, Mr. Adnam. A lady fainted, and I supported her. Here is the head and front of my offending, for I see that it is considered an offence."

"Ay, but the words—dearest and best—how do you acconnt for those?" asked Richard impertinently.

"By saying that I had just rendered the lady an essential service."

"Ha! a service!—We shall come at the whole truth presently. What service? What lady?"

"There has been more than enough of this, Weston; you have tried my patience sufficiently," said Wyvill with a dignity that awed his petty tormentor. "Could I in delicacy to another explain, malice would find no food to feed on," he added with a lofty air, glancing defyingly at Edred, and with a softened gaze at Rosalind.

"I agree with you, Mr. Wyvill. There has been more than enough of this, and I join in your desire that nothing more may be said on the subject," remarked Mrs. Denham with formal severity.

"I at least, my dear madam, will never cross your wishes, and regret that my first indiscreet remark brought on such a painful discussion. I should not have been provoked into revealing what I saw," said Edred with a frankness that won him the praise of many.

"Mrs. Denham's wishes are laws to me," observed Richard Weston fawningly.

"Then help Mrs. Sewell to some of those strawberries next you."

"With great pleasure, my dear madam. Will you allow me to help you also?" he added.

This she declined, but others accepted, and praise of the fruit, the garden, the shrubberies, and all belonging to Mrs. Denham, of which praises she seemed to take no heed, succeeded to the discussion on Rupert Wyvill's actions;

but anything worthy of being called conversation there was not, for most of the guests felt awkward and constrained, including Wyvill himself, the cause of this constraint in others. For some minutes he seemed lost in thought, painful thought, as might be guessed from the contraction of his brow; then, rousing himself, he endeavoured to converse with Rosalind as he had conversed with her a short time before —as he had conversed with her at the Pearsons, bringing into play the full force of his powerful, yet imaginative mind, thus tendering to Rosalind the most intoxicating flattery that a talented man can tender to a sensible woman, namely a proof that he deems her capable of understanding and appreciating the bursts of genius, and the arguments of reason; but his efforts were only crowned with a partial success.

He tried to talk, and Rosalind tried to listen and reply as before; but neither succeeded as they wished; so the conversation languished, and at last died away; and there was silence

between them when Mrs. Denham moved an adjournment to the drawing room.

All that evening was Edred Cottrell at Rosalind's side—now jesting and laughing—now teaching her the art of a new puzzle.

She had declined singing, though pressed to join in a duet with her brother, and afterwards to accompany him and Wyvill in the birth-day strain, that Mr Broderick might judge of its merits.

"She was hoarse," she said; and her voice certainly did sound harsh and husky, owing, Mrs. Sewell protested, to her having lingered late in the evening air, though her walk had been solitary.

Was it her wish or Edred's that made them so inseparable? Miss Bailey, who would have liked nothing better than a flirtation with her lively cousin, affirmed the former—whilst Michael and Mrs. Sewell as loudly affirmed the latter.

"Who shall decide when doctors disagree?"

Wyvill retired to a quiet corner with a book, as he had often done before, but there was a cloud on his brow, and the proud look of one who deemed himself hardly judged.

"Going to market, ladies," said Rupert on the succeeding morning, meeting Rosalind, Maria, and Miss Bailey, as they were going, immediately after breakfast, to gather flowers for Mrs. Denham, who piqued herself on their arrangement in her very beautiful china vases.

"You are of the opinion of the Italians, I conclude from the question, who hold that — '*Tre donne ed un occa fan un mercato,*'" answered Rosalind with a show of gaiety.

They were the first words she had addressed to him since they had been neighbours at the dinner table the day before.

"I thank you for the compliment, Miss Trevor," he replied reddening at her words.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Wyvill; I did not at the moment consider the interpretation that might be put on my proverb, but no one can

doubt your sense," she replied with a slight emphasis on the word sense, "or liken you to a goose; and I merely meant that as one swallow does not make a summer, so three ladies with baskets cannot constitute a market."

"Do not trouble yourself to give an explanation, Miss Trevor, I require no apology," observed Rupert proudly. "It is not the first severe thing you have said, and probably will not be the last."

"Possibly not, as I cannot weigh and measure my words," answered Rosalind as proudly, in her turn hurt at his lofty demeanour.

"Let me assist you in mastering that rose bush," said Wyvill, turning to Miss Bailey.

He had addressed Miss Trevor with the *empressement*, which had distinguished his manner towards her since the evening at the Pearsons—he had been met with sarcasm and pride: he was now as proud and lofty as herself, and ready for an encounter of wits as of old.

As Miss Bailey was delighted to have an atten-

dant beau, and moreover not a little proud that the distinguished looking Rupert Wyvill, who was reported to be insensible to the power of female charms, should be that beau, and assist her in preference to Maria and Rosalind, two acknowledged beauties, she took care to need his aid at every rose-bush, to say nothing of consulting his taste as to other flowers, thus detaining him by her side with or against his will—the former as it seemed, since he chatted gaily with his fair detainer, showing no inclination to escape from the bondage in which she sought to retain him.

Rosalind's basket was filled the first, Maria being always slow, and leaving her companions to conclude their robbery of the bees without her, she tripped lightly into the house to deliver up her fragrant treasures.

From some accident, the postman had been delayed that morning, and the bag had only just arrived when she entered Mrs. Denham's study, who, in return for the flowers, placed a

letter in her hands, which Rosalind immediately retired to her room to read, at least so she said; but the letter lay long unopened before her as she sat at the table, her head resting on her hand, and her eyes fixed as the eyes of one who thinks and feels but does not see. She knew by the direction that this letter came from a young friend about her own age, who had been her playfellow in childhood and to whom she was much attached; and yet, for a time, the seal remained unbroken, though she was generally, according to Edred, eager for letters, devouring their contents like a half starved *gourmand*. In truth Rosalind was in a reverie, and a painful one too, for the lips quivered fearfully; but as reveries cannot last for ever, so at length was Rosalind's broken by the unsentimental circumstance of Mrs. Sewell's maid entering to speak about some needful hemming and sewing, to which Miss Trevor applied herself with a self-command that showed no symptom of her late pre-occupation.

A romantic reverie once broken by a common place incident is rarely resumed at once—certainly not in the same spirit. The thread may break in the spinner's hand, and be joined so skilfully that none shall discover the rupture, but it is not so in the threads spun by the mind. The thread of thought once broken cannot be joined again on the instant, or, at best, will show the join; so when the maid had left the room instead of sinking into a new reverie, or continuing the old one, Rosalind took up the letter, her heart reproaching her the while for her selfish carelessness as to her friend's welfare. The seal was broken with a listless air, but ere the first ten lines were read that listless air was replaced by the hurry of eager interest. The letter was short—it began abruptly, and ended the same—and the post mark was Drinkbourne.

"I have been near you, dear Rosalind—within a few miles, and yet they would not let

me see you lest the meeting should agitate me, for I have been ill—dangerously ill, and even now have scarcely strength to guide my pen: it is hoped that the sea to which I am going will restore me. If my nurses thought that by preventing my visit to Denham they should also prevent my seeing one now staying there they were mistaken, for I saw him to-day, though they do not know it. Need I tell you who this one is? Who can it be but Rupert Wyvill? My father will not hear of our attachment, unless Rupert become the owner of Denham. Oh, this love of gold! I would wed him were we obliged to toil for our daily bread. I know you did not like him, dear Rose; he piqued and offended you—but for my sake, you must forget this, and do all you can to advance his interest with Mrs. Denham. Think that my happiness depends on this, and then I know I may count on your zeal. He too has been ill, and looks worn and harrassed instead

of joyous as of old; soothe him—comfort him—rouse him from despondency!—for my sake, dearest, do all this, but never, never name me to him. I rely on your affection and delicacy for this. He must not even guess that you know my secret. How happy must you be to see him, hear him every hour. I envy you and should be jealous, dreading you for my rival, did I not know that your heart was Edred Cottrell's. Yet, were it not so, you are too generous to supplant your friend.—They threaten to take away my pen—they will not let me write more.

Yours ever, dearest Rosa,

SUSAN WAY."

"Write directly—tell me all freely—no one sees my letters."

Rosalind's cheek flushed at the first reading, paled at the second; and as she laid it down

after a third perusal her quivering lips grew of a livid hue, and she gasped for breath as if choking.

"Then it was Susan he met at Drinkbourne. He loves her—I am rightly punished for my pique and pride," murmured the self accusing girl. "And yet"—she added—then paused abruptly, as a flood of contending feelings and agitating recollections rushed upon her. "No, no; there can be no, yet—I was mistaken.—There must be no more of this," she said after a while, speaking in a resolute tone. "No more of this," she repeated with a sigh. "Ah! who can say to the throbbing heart be still? to the rebellious thoughts obey? I will—I will do it,"—she continued with sudden energy, dashing back the long curls that had fallen over her face, and then hastily drinking a glass of water as she felt a faintness coming over her. "Envy me! How little do we know whom we have cause to envy," was her thought, letting the paper fall from her hand with a

shudder. Its contents were too strongly impressed on her mind to be forgotten—she could have repeated them every word, they were burnt in on her heart with ineffaceable characters. "Sooth him! console him! rouse him from despondency. Yes, it shall be done!—Too generous to supplant a rival—my heart already Edred Cottrell's," repeated Rosalind with a strange bitterness of tone. Then her thoughts took a less selfish turn, and every thing was forgotten but sympathy with the sufferer. "Poor Susan! she cares not for wealth I know, and yet a worldling's love of money steps in to mar her happiness. Poor Susan! yet no—she is not to be pitied—she is beloved, whilst others"—she stopped abruptly in her course of thought, passing her hand across her brow as if to drive away some painful recollection. "And I too am happy—will be happy"—she involuntarily exclaimed aloud with that resolute tone that speaks a determined mind. "I will write and tell her all—all at least that it would

give her pleasure to hear," she added with a slight shiver. "Yes write directly—promise all she desires—do all I can to promote his interest with Mrs. Denham; but Michael—my brother must come first;—should he fail, then every energy shall be devoted to promote his—her—their happiness."

As she concluded the sentence, her sudden energy died away, she again wore the white, cold look of a statue; and the hand was again extended towards the water. "I would be strong, and yet am weak," she murmured, letting her head sink on her crossed arms as they rested on the table. A low and choking sob was heard, and the table shook beneath the weight of her who leant upon it; but when she looked up, some half hour after, there was no trace of weeping, and her eye was bright—too bright—it had a burning, painful light; and there was a crimson spot on either cheek, though the rest of the face was deadly pale. She rose with a lofty air and crossed the room

for her writing desk. There was no faltering in her tread—the step was firm; she had struggled—she had conquered.

The world talked of her high spirits, counted her volatile, and called her the merry Rosalind. Few guessed what lay beneath that gay exterior. A heart to feel, even to agony;—a mind to will and do, even to self-sacrifice.

Ere the letter could be begun she was interrupted by Mrs. Bailey, who claimed her promised assistance in discussing an intricate pattern. Poor Rosalind! Of all minor trials there are none so trying as to be called on by a commonplace person, to discuss commonplace subjects, when the mind is torn by contending emotions; or worse, when it has struggled and gained a victory with hard fighting, and is full of a lofty resolution that bears it above the petty topics of this work-a-day world. The cruel torment to be compelled to discourse on needles and pins, knitting and netting, collars and capes, German wool and floss silk, when

the heart is wrung with bitter pangs—torn by a thrilling grief! Yet Rosalind acquitted herself well. She measured and counted—compared shades and sizes so judiciously, and patiently, that good-natured Mrs. Bailey was in raptures with her skill and attention, and prepared to uphold her as a model for all young persons ever after. Had she seen Rosalind's look of disgust and weariness as the door closed behind her, and heard her muttered exclamation, "I wish needles had never been invented!" she would have been utterly astounded, probably offended, and scarcely appeased by Rosalind's succeeding self-reproach at her own impatience, and conviction of selfishness in thinking her joys and woes of greater consequence than those of others.

If Mrs. Bailey found pleasure in hem-stitch, and cross-stitch, and tent-stitch, and satin-stitch, what right had she to blame her? she who found pleasure in lively sallies, and dreamy reveries that did no more good to her fellow

creatures, and could not even serve for footstools, capes, or ottomans. Mrs. Bailey neither saw nor heard aught of this, so she rang Rosalind's praise in the drawing-room in double quick time, and bobmajor, firing the bells at her daughter, who hinted a dislike to her very lively cousin as she called her in derision; and when Miss Trevor appeared at luncheon immediately after, but for the most resolute self-denial she would infallibly have been crammed into a surfeit by the grateful Mrs. Bailey, who not only offered but pressed her to partake of every dish on the table, little suspecting how poorly her kindness was appreciated.

And Rosalind bore all this torturing attention, and all her commonplace questions and remarks without a sharp word, or impatient glance; and when she retired to her own room on the conclusion of the meal to write the letter, which she had been prevented writing in the morning, Mrs. Bailey observed on her bright colour, her brighter eye, and her never

failing flow of spirits. Alas! alas! is it for our weal or woe that we cannot see into the hearts of others? If we could, what tales of untold, unguessed suffering we should read!

The letter was written, folded, sealed, and directed, as Susan Way had requested, and then, and not till then, did Rosalind pause and tremble, pushing away the missive with a convulsive shudder. But she dared not think—she dared not allow herself to dwell on the past—or the future; to be victor over herself she must for the present be only of the present, gliding along with the current, catching for distraction and amusement at every trifle that came in her way;—for a time, she must be all action and no thought. She had filled her letter with praises of Rupert Wyvill—she had told of his kindness to Hester Darley and her grandchild—of his admirable acting—of all that could please one who loved as dotingly as Susan Way; and her pen had not paused, seeming to gather inspiration from her subject

—it had not even stopped when she pledged herself to do all she could to further his interests, when they did not interfere with her brother's, ending with the warmest wishes for her happiness, and an intimation that she knew of their meeting on the previous day. She had resolved—she had taken the first step. Was she to shame her late strength by present weakness? Was she to draw back when her hand was in the work? She put her letter in the bag—she went and sat by the sick bed of poor Anne, who had scarcely left her room for the last fortnight; and then she joined the Baileys and Maria on the lawn, saying a thousand merry things to them and the gentlemen around them, causing Mr. Adnam to rub his hands with remarkable glee as she insisted on his talking sense to her, she being tired of the compliments of Edred and Terry Weston, the latter of whom was more than usually dull from the temporary absence of Miss Highworth. Wyvill was not there—he had not been seen

since the morning, when he had set off towards Drinkbourne, as Richard asserted, winking with his accustomed vulgarity, and glancing as he did so at Rosalind, who to his surprise showed no annoyance at the insinuation.

CHAPTER V.

"So the Ridgeways and Pearsons are to dine here to-day, and some near neighbours to join the party in the evening," thought Rosalind with a sigh as she sat in her room, arranging her ringlets after a walk. "Perhaps it is better that it should be so; individuals ever attract less attention in a crowd, and the bustle of society disturbs the brooding over misery."

Mrs. Denham was generally accounted an unsociable person, but if sociability consists in

cramming house and table with guests Mrs. Denham was not unsociable, at least at the present time, for her large mansion and large dining-room were filled to overflowing. Perhaps she had as great an objection to family parties as some persons of my acquaintance, and therefore threw in a large proportion of strangers to neutralise or enliven the stupidity of the one assembled at her house; or perhaps, considering herself compelled from her wealth and station to visit and be visited, she hoped by having the whole neighbourhood at once to secure an after period of repose, instead of spreading her duties as hostess over a larger space, and thus prolonging her pains; or perhaps, and this seems the most reasonable supposition, she fully understood that whilst a host or hostess must, or should entertain a few, a crowd can entertain itself; and the giver of the banquet, provided all the dining and drawing-room arrangements are judicious, may be as silent and stupid as she pleases.

Mrs. Denham could not or would not talk, so she was glad, if compelled to invite one visitor, to have twenty, who could chatter away to each other. She did not like family parties, and this in the eyes of some proved her to be unsociable, for unsociable people always vote family parties to be family bores; so as we have already said her house and table were on this day filled to overflowing, and Michael was again anxious that his sister should look her very best; and in his estimation not only her beauty but her conversation also was remarkably brilliant.

She had wronged Rupert in the matter of the damsel at Drinkbourne, suspecting him of wooing more than one at a time, for his present pleasure, or having in the words of the song—

> "Bent his knee at every shrine,
> And left his heart at none;"

and she was bound to repair this wrong; for which purpose, and in conformity with her promise to Susan, she resolved on being pecu-

liarly friendly and pleasant when next they met, but her plans were frustrated for the time being by his only joining the party in their passage to the dining-room; and by her being secured as a neighbour by Captain Ridgeway and Edred Cottrell, who vied during the whole of dinner, a *l'envie l'un de l'autre*, in their attentions; not only endeavouring to cram her like Mrs. Bailey with roast meats, and boiled meats, sweets and sours; but also with honied words and admiring looks, till she was led to think on the sentence in her morning's letter—"I know your heart is already Edred Cottrell's," and to speculate upon its truth.

Was her heart Edred Cottrell's? And what was more important was his heart hers? There were those at table who judging from his *petits soins*, and her manner of receiving them would have answered both questions in the affirmative, and of this number were her brother, Mrs. Sewell, and perhaps Wyvill, who sitting exactly opposite occasionally glanced at his fair *vis-á-vis*

though his general devotion to his next neighbour, a pretty sensible girl, was exemplary.

"Now that the sun departs there will be darkness all around," said Captain Ridgeway, gallantly, as Rosalind rose to follow the ladies from the room.

"Do you mean to compare me to a huge ball of fire, that dazzles and tans us, and was only created to bring Rowland's Kalydor into fashion?" she answered gaily, feeling no vexation at the compliment as she had done before in Wyvill's case. What mattered it to her whether Captain Ridgeway thought her frivolous or not?

"I will submit to the tanning and dazzling—only let me bask in the warmth of its ray," was the reply of the young soldier; and true to his words he sought her immediately on entering the drawing-room and secured her hand for the first dance, when Mrs. Denham proposed a quadrille, having procured the attendance of the village band.

"How brilliant your sister is this evening—so lively, so fascinating!" remarked Captain Ridgeway to Michael, a little annoyed, as young Trevor thought, at her receiving Edred's attentions so graciously, and appearing so absorbed in his conversation as to forget the mysteries of Finale. He could not catch the subject of their discourse, which was Ivy Cottage and her parents, of whom Edred had that day heard satisfactory accounts from a friend.

"Yes, Rose is in her brightest mood to-night—her buoyant spirits will bear her triumphantly through every ill."

"I wish I had a fortune," observed Captain Ridgeway abruptly, after gazing for some moments upon Rosalind.

"I wish you had," replied Michael, laughing at the sudden exclamation. "And my pretty Rose too: she will have next to nothing," he added more gravely. "But then she is a fortune in herself; and so Cottrell seems

to think. He is a fine generous fellow and deserves her, that I must say."

"Then I am to understand that they are engaged," observed Captain Ridgeway with something like a sigh.

"Or will be, I conclude, one of these days if I may trust Cottrell himself. They will make a handsome couple, won't they?" he added, appealing to Wyvill, whom he just then espied at his elbow.

"Very handsome," answered Rupert, crossing the room to join Mr. Adnam, who greeted him with the exclamation—

"Cottrell will certainly win that girl. Why do not you enter the lists against him?"

"I will be second to none."

"But you might be first if you chose to put forth all your energies."

"Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle."

"You are worse than a Goth to say so. Do

not assume such a lofty air, or I shall suspect that the grapes are sour."

"Does Miss Trevor then proclaim me her slave," enquired Rupert, a crimson flush spreading over his whole face.

"You the slave of any woman? Why you are a statue—formed out of a block of polar ice, and fashioned on the morning of the shortest day. I do not believe that you can love."

"Don't you!" said Wyvill, leaving Mr. Adnam as abruptly as he had left Michael, and challenging an elderly lady in a discordant voice to a game at *écarté*.

"That was an odd tone," thought Mr. Adnam, but something else attracting his attention at the moment, his mind turned to other things.

Rosalind's hand was sought by many, the marked attentions of Edred and Captain Ridgeway having made her the fashion, so that she found no opportunity of shewing a friendly feeling towards Rupert as she had intended

for a considerable time; but at length, perceiving him almost alone, she approached and addressed him, if not without some slight confusion, notwithstanding her efforts, yet with what she considered a manner marking her wish to be friends, and atone for any former coldness. Whether he interpreted her manner as she intended was another thing. Each one looks through a glass of his own, so one sees the landscape as *couleur de rose*, another as yellow. "You bespoke me as a partner three days since—shall I be very bold and offer you my hand for the next quadrille?"

"I must feel flattered by the offer; but it comes too late.—I am engaged," he answered moodily, startled by her words, for he was not aware that she was beside him, so light, so timid had been her tread.

The next instant he was was joined by Mr. Broderick, and obliged to listen and reply to his uninteresting remarks on the music and the company.

A burning blush spread over Rosalind's face, and neck, and brow. "It is well! I can do no more, even for Susan's sake," was her thought as she turned away.

The clock struck eleven. She started, and by a strong effort resumed her self-command; but the still burning blush would not depart at her bidding. Her cheeks were glowing—her brain seemed all on fire.

"Are you afraid of a metamorphosis *á la cinderella*, that you start and hurry from the room at the striking of the fatal hour?" asked Michael of his sister as she was passing him with a hasty step.

"Exactly so; but as a loving brother conceal my misfortune, and tell the world, should it deign to enquire after me, that I am gone to report its proceedings to Anne."

"Nonsense, Rose, stay here; Anne is asleep, or ought to be, and your admiring beaux will hang themselves in despair at your absence."

"Like a string of onions. How well they will look suspended from the kitchen rafters."

"You will suffer for this impertinence, Rose. Cupid will take his revenge, and I shall see you sighing and pining beneath his iron rule."

"Will you?" answered his sister in a tone that struck his hearer.

"Yes that I shall, proud railer, despite your lofty defiance. But do not run away."

"I promised Anne to be with her at eleven, and it is now a minute later. Do not detain me; I shall be back immediately."

"I shall watch for your return," whispered Edred as he opened the door for her egress.

"All will be dull in your absence," looked Captain Ridgeway, but Rosalind answered neither—she saw not—heard not.

"I hope, dear, you have not been expecting me," said Rosalind gliding gently towards the

bed of the invalid, and taking the feverish hand that lay extended on the coverlet in hers.

"Oh, no, dear cousin; it is only five minutes after the time by the great clock, and I thought perhaps you were engaged in a quadrille."

"You did not doubt my coming?"

"No indeed; I never doubt anything you say: I knew you would give up your own pleasure to please another. It is so kind of you to come and talk to me, when you are so much admired, and sought after, and I am sorry now that I said the medicine was less nauseous when you gave it; it was selfish of me."

"Not at all selfish, dear Anne, and believe me I would much rather be here with you than in the dancing-room. So now let me play nurse, and do you be a very patient patient," answered Rosalind sweetly, giving the medicine to the sufferer with a look of affectionate sympathy, that might almost have won the dying back to life.

"I wish you were my sister, dear Rose; and

then I should be always with you," said Anne, kissing the hand that had again taken hers.

"You have a more beautiful, and better tempered sister."

"No, no; neither in my eyes. Maria is very beautiful, and I like to look at her; and she is not cross, but she is not like you, dear Rose; she wants your—your—your heart, ah! that is it. I wish I were not so ugly," she added with a sigh.

"Ugly, dear Anne! you are not ugly. What a fancy!

"Mamma says so: I wish I was as beautiful as Maria, and then mamma would love me as she does her," said Anne with touching sadness.

"She does love you, my dear Anne. Do not take such a fancy as that into your head."

"Yes, love me perhaps as all mothers must—a little—a very little. I wish I were a beauty like you, Rosalind," she added passionately.

"Do not wish to be like me, Anne; beauty does not bring happiness."

"Are not you happy then?" questioned the eager girl, starting up to look into Rosalind's face, struck as Michael had been with her tone.

"Lie down! Lie down! this will never do. I did not say that I was unhappy; but you remember the fate of poor Mrs. Drummond; rich, beautiful, and talented—yet miserable!" answered Rosalind evasively.

"Yes, miserable!" repeated the invalid in a hollow voice that made Rosalind shudder; and yet it was scarcely more hollow than her own had been. "But she died young," added Anne, after a brief pause.

"There was consumption in the family," observed Rosalind understanding the sufferer's train of thought, and framing her answer accordingly.

"I shall die young to o," said Anne in a voice scarcely above a whisper.

"I will have no such gloomy fancies Anne," replied Rosalind cheerfully:" your pulse is

better, and I insist on a speedy recovery to do honor to my nursing."

"Do you think it such a sad thing to die young then?" questioned Anne, gazing earnestly into her face. "It would be sad for you whom every body loves; but for me—no one loves me!"

"Do not tell fibs, Anne, I love you for one; and your mother and sister love you, and many more, so away with these idle forebodings," cried Rosalind, pressing her lips to the parched ones of the invalid, who clung round her neck with a convulsive grasp.

As this emotion could not be beneficial, and might prove highly injurious, instead of allowing the sufferer to proceed in the same melancholy strain Rosalind sought to cheer and amuse her, and soon succeeded even beyond her hopes.

Anne not only smiled but absolutely laughed at her kind cousin's sallies, and Rosalind on her part went on chatting and cheering till the

dance and the dancers were quite forgotten; and she thought only of the pleasure she was giving the poor neglected girl, who, in spite of her gentle disposition, was little noticed by any of her family.

"Here comes Turner to scold me for talking so much I suppose," said Rosalind, as the door opened and a person approached the bed. "Do not be cross, nurse," she added playfully, peeping round the curtain. "I have done Anne more good than Doctor Jackson, and all the ptisans and salines, and shall claim an enormous fee."

It was not the nurse, but Mrs. Denham, who showed some surprise at the sight of Rosalind.

"You here, Miss Trevor! I thought you were in the saloon surrounded with beaux and inundated with compliments."

"You were mistaken then, madam," answered Rosalind coldly, hurt at Mrs. Denham's remark, which appeared to her as meant for a rebuke.

"So it seems; but the saloon is a more fitting place for you at this time."

"I prefer amusing Anne."

"Your partners will lament your absence—you had better return," said Mrs. Denham, with her usual formality, showing no displeasure at the brusqueness of Rosalind's answers.

"Yes, you had better go, dear Rose; it was very selfish of me to ask you to come and give me my medicine."

"Not at all selfish, dear Anne, as I told you before; I am much happier here than I should be in the saloon."

Mrs. Denham looked at her steadily, Rosalind fancied searchingly, and beyond this imagined that she could perceive a slight shake of the head, and a rather softer intonation of voice when she next addressed her.

"You had better return to the saloon, Miss Trevor; unless indeed you would prefer retiring to rest for you look flushed, yet worn."

"Do you think so, madam; I have been complimented on looking especially brilliant."

"Very likely, Miss Trevor; but I am no flatterer. However since you will not admit of indisposition, return to the dancers; by remaining here you prevent Anne's obtaining the sleep she needs. I will arrange her pillows—your gay remarks will only excite her."

As this was said in a peremptory tone that allowed of no opposition, Rosalind, after kissing her young cousin, quitted the room, leaving that young cousin to a *tête-à-tête* with the cold, the formal, the dreaded Mrs. Denham.

Poor Anne was in dismay, but her terror soon subsided. Mrs. Denham smoothed the counterpane and arranged the pillows, not only with care, but kindness; nay, she even listened graciously to her affectionate praises of Rosalind in answer to an enquiry of how long she had been there, then, feeling her pulse and and predicting speedy amendment, she left her

with a friendly good night, after placing some fruit beside her—the purpose of her visit.

"This is just right; I was looking for a *vis-a-vis*, and Cottrell for a partner; you will fill both offices admirably," cried Michael seizing on his sister immediately on her return to the saloon, and whisking her off towards the quadrille, beckoning Edred to follow.

"I am to have no choice in the matter it seems," said Rosalind.

"None whatever: you must be sacrificed for my advantage, so submit to martyrdom with a good grace," answered her brother, his arch look telling how little like martyrdom he supposed she would consider the dancing with Cottrell.

"Then you must make yourself most exceedingly agreeable, cousin Edred," said Rosalind, striving to shake off the painful impression left by Michael's assertion, that she must be sacrificed for his advantage, an asser-

tion which had struck her with the force of a prophecy.

"What would I not do to obtain your hand?" whispered Edred, just not so low but that he was overheard by Wyvill, who was standing near.

"You are a most wonderful creature, cousin Edred! you are a mint. You can coin compliments as her majesty's servants coin farthings, with this superiority, that what they coin has cost them something in the raw material, and they work only by day, whereas you coin also by night," answered Rosalind; but Wyvill did not hear her, for he had been called away by Mr. Adnam.

"Mine are no coined compliments, fair Rosalind; but the outpouring of truth."

The figure of the dance prevented a reply.

Rosalind's call on Edred to make himself especially agreeable was fully answered. His whole powers of conversation, and they were considerable, were put in requisition to attract

and rivet her attention, and so well did he succeed, that Captain Ridgeway admitted that had a longer acquaintance allowed him to form hopes, those hopes would have been vain. To conceal her feelings from all, even from herself, if she could, Rosalind rushed as it were into gaiety and excitement, never considering what constructions might be put on her conduct by others. As long as the truth was not guessed, she thought of little else.

Though Wyvill had listened quietly to Mr. Broderick's remarks, and answered them with wonderful propriety, considering that he did not comprehend more than a quarter of what was said, his thoughts were with Miss Trevor. Scarcely had his brief reply been made, ere he felt that it had been abrupt, unkind, nay, even rude, and was anxious to apologise for his brusquerie; but when he looked for Rosalind she was no where to be found, and as Edred was absent also, he set it down as a fact that they must be together. Who has not suffered

from setting down a supposition as a fact? Yet who learns wisdom as he should from experience?

When next he saw her Edred was beside her, and his looks and tones were the looks and tones of a lover; such at least was Rupert's interpretation of his soft whisper. After getting rid of Mr. Adnam he continued to watch the cousins. He saw her attention—he met Edred's triumphant glance, and determined that his conduct must be a matter of indifference to Rosalind, and that to interrupt her conversation with Cottrell would be counted uncourteous and unwelcome. He would have joined her when Cottrell left her, but she was claimed by another partner, and again hurried off to take her place in the closing quadrille, in which he was himself compelled to perform.

Then to this last quadrille succeeded leave takings—such warm leave takings on the part of the Ridgeways, who were delighted with Rosalind, that he could not interrupt them

without another breach of politeness; and when he returned to the saloon after escorting Miss Pearson to the carriage, at Mrs. Denham's request, Miss Trevor was gone. He lingered, but she did not return; so he too was obliged to retire without having apologised for his cold rejection of her hand, and with the feeling that to name the subject on the morrow would appear ridiculous, as she had probably already forgotten a circumstance so trivial in her eyes.

His prior engagement was no fabricated plea; but it should have been urged more gently, and her friendly advances met in the same spirit. If she had piqued and wounded him in the morning, she was inclined to make amends in the evening—but he had repulsed her attempt at reconciliation, and she was never likely to renew it. That whilst seeking for Rosalind he had forgotten to fulfil his pleaded engagement till sought by the lady's brother, was only a second act of incivility, and no excuse for the first. They were both high-spirited and proud

—too high-spirited and proud; and the probability was that if not open foes they would still never be friends.

"It matters not;—she will be Cottrell's bride, and I enter no house of his as a guest," was Rupert's closing thought, as after tossing about this side and that, he settled himself in a proper sleeping position with the resolution to remain awake no longer.

How such resolutions are generally kept there are few who cannot tell.

CHAPTER. VI.

"RAKING does not agree with you, my dear," remarked Mrs. Bailey abruptly the following morning, raising her eyes from her own emptied plate to Rosalind's face. "You are as pale as a ghost, and your eye-lids look as if they were held down by a weight, and could not be lifted up."

"No libel on my good looks if you please, Mrs. Bailey," answered Rosalind, a crimson flush belying the accusation of paleness, as she

felt that the eyes of all assembled at the breakfast table were fixed upon her," I consider myself as robust as a milkmaid."

"You may consider yourself to be what you please, my dear, but every one else will agree with me that you are looking wretchedly ill, though you have coloured scarlet now, because we are all staring at you. There is a red line round your eyes, and—"

"How rude Mrs. Bailey, to accuse me of having ferret's eyes," exclaimed poor Rosalind, interrupting her; hoping by an assumption of gaiety to silence all further comment on her appearance.

"You may laugh if you please, and call me rude too, my dear; but I still maintain that you are looking very ill, just as if you had not had a wink of sleep all night. Don't you agree with me, my dear Mrs. Denham?"

"Miss Trevor danced a great deal; and may well feel fatigued this morning," answered that lady as quietly, asif the good or ill looks

of her guest were a matter of perfect indifference.

"I am sure I danced quite as much, and so did Elizabeth; and yet we are not tired," remarked Jemima Bailey, who did not like to have it supposed that Rosalind had danced more than herself and sister.

"But you were not up at six this morning, and seated by Anne's bed side," remarked Mrs. Sewell, firing up in defence of Rosalind, without clearly comprehending from what accusation she meant to defend her. "I told her she would get a headache, and now it has come I am sure from her heavy eyes and purple lids."

"You could have had no sleep, Rose. How could you think of doing this, imprudent girl?" said Michael, looking at his sister with affectionate reproach.

"You spoil Anne, humouring her whims in this way," observed Mrs. Weston, colouring and using a tone of reproof to hide from others

and herself the neglect of the poor patient invalid.

"You really should be more careful of yourself," said Edred in tender accents.

"If I am to be scolded all round, I shall take flight," cried Rosalind, forcing a laugh though her head was aching with a dull, heavy ache that weighed down her eye-lids as Mrs. Bailey had remarked, and pressed upon her spirits heavier still.

"No, no: instead of flying off let me give you another cup of coffee. Here is the letter bag, so the good folks will be better employed than in making you uncomfortable by staring at you," said Edred kindly, pouring out the coffee as he spoke.

He was right—for some moments all were too much engaged with letters or papers to observe whether Rosalind's cheek grew pale from exhaustion, or flushed with fever.

"What is the matter, Trevor? You are making wry faces at your news," remarked

Richard Weston, delighted at the opportunity of saying something annoying.

"Cause enough to make wry faces," exclaimed Michael fretfully, taking no pains to conceal his vexation. "Had it arrived but yesterday, I might have made some arrangements with Colonel Ridgeway, but unluckily he was to leave the Pearsons this morning at eight, and I do not know his direction."

"But what is the mischief, man? for this grumbling tells us nothing."

"The mischief is this:—Chalmers, who took my duty, is called away to a dying father, and as some timid manufacturers are talking nonsense about apprehended riots, my presence is required at head quarters, which is most provoking when I am so happy here, and so much enjoy my holydays. Perhaps I can manage it though by a little activity. I will be off to the Pearsons at once:—the Colonel's journey may have been delayed, or I may over-

take him, and obtain permission to remain here awhile."

"When we receive pay for the performance of duties, those duties should be conscientiously performed. I should think you had better obey the mandate without any demur—a soldier should be at his post in time of danger," observed Mrs. Denham pointedly.

Such words, and such a manner could not be disputed: Michael saw at once that he must leave Denham, and the malicious smiles exchanged between Richard and the Misses Bailey, showed that they considered him a banished man. He glanced across at Rosalind, whose cheek had again become deadly pale, and read in her look a confirmation of his fears.

"Such being your opinion, my dear Mrs. Denham, of course I submit with what patience I may," said Michael, after a little hesitation.

"I think you will do right; few have the

power of following their own inclinations," observed Mrs. Denham, a little softened, some imagined by his ready submission. "When must you go?"

"I should leave this at six to meet the mail."

"Then we will dine at five to-day," said Mrs. Denham as she left the room.

"How provoking!" said Rosalind with tears in her eyes, as she strolled out on the lawn with her brother.

"Maria will be in despair at having no one to flirt with, since Rosalind monopolises Cottrell and Wyvill," observed Richard maliciously.

The brother and sister made no reply, but walked on arm in arm till they were alone. Michael grumbled and fretted at his recall, whilst Rosalind soothed and cheered him, though her own heart was heavy at his departure, and tears rolled down her cheeks as she strove to reconcile him to his fate.

"If I could but tell whether the old woman spoke only from her formal ideas of duty, or from a wish to get rid of me, I should be better satisfied," exclaimed the young soldier impatiently, as he was leaving his sister in the hall to give the needful orders to his servant.

His wish was soon accomplished. Mrs. Denham's feelings were to be made sufficiently clear.

"If you will come into my study, Miss Trevor, I will show you the old book of which I was speaking yesterday," said Mrs. Denham encountering Rosalind upon the stairs.

Had she followed her own inclinations, Rosalind would have pleaded a head-ache as an excuse for deferring the inspection of the book till some future time, but for Michael's sake she accompanied her hostess with thanks for the offer.

"Take a seat, Miss Trevor," said Mrs. Denham after showing the old tome. "As you have doubtless guessed, I did not seek this in-

terview for the sole purpose of displaying my book—I would ask you a few questions."

Rosalind trembled, and turned red and white in a minute. What could her cold and formal hostess wish to ask her? Not knowing how to reply, she merely bowed, whilst Mrs. Denham took a seat directly opposite, so that she could notice every change of countenance. I wish to ask a few questions is an awful commencement at any time, but when made by a cold, and as Rosalind believed, unfeeling person, it was absolutely terrific to one of high spirits, and a warm heart.

"I am not given to long prefaces, and therefore, Miss Trevor, I must beg you to excuse me if my questions should seem abrupt," began Mrs. Denham after a short, but to Rosalind, awful pause.

It might be only the effect of imagination, but Rosalind fancied that the speaker's eye was keener than usual.

"Does your brother owe the Messrs. Tan-

ner and Co. two hundred pounds for the hire of horses, carriages, and other things?"

"No, madam;" answered Rosalind resolutely, though undecided whether to grieve or rejoice that the dreaded questions referred to her brother instead of herself.

"You speak very positively on this point. Does Lieutenant Trevor make you acquainted with all his debts?"

"It should seem that you thought so, madam, from applying to me on the subject," answered Rosalind, vexed at what she considered an implied doubt of her veracity, and afraid of committing her brother by a more open reply.

"You are not speaking with your usual frankness, Miss Trevor," remarked Mrs. Denham severely.

"Frankness, madam, should extend only to our own concerns."

"Are you quite sure that if I questioned you

as to your own concerns I should meet with that frankness of which you boast."

"I am ever frank, madam, to those who from affection or relationship have the right to claim my confidence."

"This is another evasion, Miss Trevor;—but let it pass—I see you do not consider me entitled by relationship or affection to claim your confidence, and must frame my questions differently. Had not your brother such a debt a short time since?"

"He had," answered Rosalind frankly, though surprised at Mrs. Denham's knowledge of the circumstance.

"You say that he has none such now—Am I to understand that it is paid?"

"Yes, madam."

"And how long since?"

Rosalind hesitated. She knew Mrs. Denham's strong opinions concerning debt, and feared lest an inadvertent admission might prejudice Michael in her eyes; yet an answer must

be given, so she had nothing left but to tell the simple truth. To falsehood she never stooped, and silence, or, an evasive reply, might do her brother more harm than good.

"It was paid some days back I believe," said Rosalind.

"How did your brother procure the money?"

"Not having the sum by him at the moment, he accepted a loan from a friend."

"Was the debt of long standing or this the first application for payment?"

"I do not know the standing of the debt."

"Nor the items?" asked Mrs. Denham as Rosalind thought incredulously.

"Nor the items, exactly; I understood they were for horses, saddlery, and needful military accoutrements—things that I could know nothing about."

"And you believed this?"

"Of course," answered Rosalind a little indignantly.

"Did you not see the bill?"

"No madam, I did not."

"What was the name of the generous friend, who lent the money?"

"Is it kind, my dear madam, to question a sister of her brother's concerns, of which she knows next to nothing, when an inadvertent word may do him serious injury in the opinion of one, whose esteem he is most anxious to obtain?" said Rosalind after a moment's pause. "Would it not be indelicate in me to name that friend? Is it not cruel in you to ask me?"

If the words were bold the manner was respectful, even sad; and Mrs. Denham, instead of being offended by her remonstrance, was touched by it, and spoke in a softer tone.

"It is not cruel, Rosalind Trevor. I ask in kindness, and question you in preference to your brother from a friendly feeling to both. You must know that this brother would not dare, if I may use the word, decline to answer my questions, and you may guess that I shall feel more interest in his welfare from conversing

with you than with him, I mean," she added quickly, catching Rosalind's look of surprise at this last assertion, "that a sister can plead more warmly and effectually for a brother, than that brother can plead for himself. We feel drawn towards one, who has had the power of exciting strong affection in another. After saying this, I leave the decision to yourself — Shall I question you or Lieutenant Trevor?"

"Me, madam, if you please, since you purpose only kindness."

Rosalind saw at once that she might with truth plead ignorance on many points, which he could not.

"You have chosen wisely. I will not exhort you to answer truly, for I believe you incapable of falsehood, even to serve your brother."

"Thank you for this belief," said Rosalind with warmth.

"To return then to my former question. Who lent the money?"

"Edred Cottrell," answered Rosalind, blushing in spite of herself.

"It was kind of him—very kind."

Rosalind looked down without speaking, and Mrs. Denham continued.

"This loan may be converted into a gift from your brother's inability to repay it."

"No, madam, it shall be repaid," answered Rosalind resolutely.

"You speak boldly on this point. How shall it be repaid? It would inconvenience your father, I imagine, to repay the sum."

"It would—I will repay it."

"How? With your hand and heart?"

"No, madam, with my purse," exclaimed Rosalind proudly, reddening as she spoke.

"I was not aware of your being so rich."

"My godmother left me three hundred pounds."

"And this you have lent your brother."

"This I will lend, or give him, as soon as I

come of age; till then it is not at my disposal."

"Till that time then, your brother must remain Edred Cottrell's debtor."

"Not if he can borrow money on my security, which he has promised me to attempt."

"Did you recommend his applying to Edred Cottrell?"

"No, madam; I knew nothing of the circumstance till the offer had been accepted, when interference would have come too late."

"Then you did not approve of his applying to him."

"It could not be called an application; Edred guessed the cause from Michael's vexation, and offered to lend the money after learning the truth by adroit questioning."

"This was a very friendly act, and I am glad Edred has money to lend his friends, since he makes such a kind use of it."

Rosalind said nothing, though aware that

Mrs. Denham was watching her and waiting for a reply.

"You appear to have a great objection to being his debtor."

"I have."

"That is a brief, but decided answer, yet some might doubt and disbelieve."

"Some might, but you expressed conviction of my being incapable of falsehood."

"I did, and would do so again. Shall I establish the justice of my conviction by further questions on this subject?"

"There can be no need," said Rosalind quickly. "You, madam, can understand my repugnance to be indebted to any."

"And to one in particular," added Mrs. Denham with the only attempt at playfulness that her young guest had ever seen; but her playfulness vanished as she concluded. "I wish this horror of being in debt ran in the family. When did you first hear of this account?"

"On the day of our meeting at Hester Darley's cottage."

"And yet, knowing this and professing a horror of debt as you do, you could be all smiles, and joy and fascination at the Pearsons: nay, if I remember right, appeared in a new and expensive dress for the first time."

"What could I do?" said Rosalind humbly and earnestly, wounded by the reproachful tone of her hostess. "Had I looked as sad as I felt the truth might have been guessed, and Colonel Ridgeway, from whose interest Michael hopes for advancement in his profession, is as particular on the subject of debt as yourself. At my brother's entreaty therefore, and to serve him, there were smiles on my lip when my heart was very sorrowful. There are many occasions when all, and more especially women, must hide the vulture that eats away their very life."

"There are some such occasions in the life of all," answered Mrs. Denham with sympathy,

touched by the passionate look and tone of the speaker. "Yet it is very grievous when the necessity falls on one so young."

"It is grievous: and hard—very hard to be borne," said Rosalind in a voice scarcely above a whisper, whilst for a moment she looked like one struck down by some deep woe; but rallying on the instant she continued in a firmer tone. "I was not joyous when we met in that poor cottage."

"No, that I admit; but I heard of your being the life of the Pearson's party, delighting all with your animation."

"Michael's pressing difficulties were removed by the loan, and it was his wish that I should please the Ridgeways, and show them marked attention;—nor will I deny," she added, after a moment's hesitation and with a slight blush, "that the gaiety at first an effort, became ere the close of the evening an impulse. It was a gay scene, and all vied in their endeavours to please me."

"And flatter you, Rosalind?"

"I fear so," she answered, and not without a touch of bitterness.

"And the new dress?"

"Oh, that horrid dress! you cannot think how I hate it, though Michael's present. I would have worn an older, plainer one, but in his affection my brother wished me to look my best, and I could not confute his argument that my wearing it would entail no fresh expence. It was mine—it was paid for—I should please him by appearing in it:—and I could not well sell it to a jew," she added with a faint smile. "I felt far more ashamed than proud when you praised it."

"I saw you did. But why permit him to purchase it at C. as I understand he did?"

"Permit! he did it without my knowledge—contrary to my remonstrance. I did not then know of this debt, or nothing should have induced me to wear this present."

"Not his entreaties and caresses?"

"I think not; but it is hard to refuse the entreaties of those we love—to remain unmoved by their caresses. I have no sister, Mrs. Denham, and only this one brother. We were always together from our birth—he grew the softer to be a fitting companion for me, and I—perhaps I learnt to play the romp to be a fitter playfellow for him," she added with one of those half arch, half timid smiles that were so full of fascination. "There were no childish quarrels to disturb our love, and owing to my father's limited income, it was late ere Michael went to school. You may smile at my simplicity—I see you do—but a brother's affection would compensate to me for the jesting of the whole world. You never had a brother, and therefore cannot tell how precious is a brother's love."

"I will not dispute this, Rosalind; but affection should not degenerate into weakness. Your brother knew of this debt when he made you the present. There is an old proverb

which he would do well to study—We should be just before we are generous."

"I cannot deny the truth of this, Mrs. Denham—I would not gainsay it if I could; but dear Michael is young—his means scanty—his disposition open and generous. There are many temptations to expense in the army; it is hard to say—no— when asked to assist a friend, or join in a pleasant excursion. And do not blame him for the gown—rather blame me. He thought me poorly dressed—he heard others say so—and his affection made him wish to see me admired."

"Does this excuse in your eyes his giving before paying."

"I would have it excuse him in yours, madam," answered Rosalind pleadingly.

"You are blinded by your affection—you will see no fault in this only brother."

"He may be too good-natured—too easily led—too willing to please and oblige, but to me

he has ever been kinder than kind—and shall I judge him harshly?"

"Not harshly, but justly, Rosalind. Are you sure that should your interests ever clash he will not call on you to do in earnest what he called on you, I understand, last night to do in jest—namely sacrifice yourself for your brother's good?"

"Quite sure! quite certain!" cried Rosalind warmly.

"Time will show," said Mrs. Denham with a grave shake of the head. "He who spends beyond his means, will require beyond his rights."

"Do not say so, my dear madam; he is generous and careless of money, but will never be selfish. And it is but two hundred pounds," she added excusingly.

"But two hundred pounds—I did not expect to hear you say this. It is more than he has to pay, and there is the crime—yes crime!"

repeated Mrs. Denham severely. "The gentleman who buys what he cannot pay for, would steal what he could not otherwise obtain were he more lowly born, or feared not the law. I hoped you thought more seriously of incurring debts, and thus defrauding the honest tradesman."

"It is not what I think, my dear madam; but young men—and young men in the army, mixing in the world, should not be judged as a simple country girl, who has nothing to tempt her but a satin dress, or a golden brooch, for which in truth I care but little."

"You learnt this from your brother I conclude."

Rosalind coloured, and looked down, for just such had been his arguments.

"You say but two hundred pounds! Are you quite certain that he owes no more? Will you pledge your word to me that, excepting this, he is free from debt? You are silent—you turn away—I am answered."

"Do not misconstrue my silence—do not misjudge Michael"—exclaimed Rosalind eagerly. "On my honor, I know of no other debts."

"You may not know, but do you suspect no other?"

"This is cruel Mrs. Denham—very cruel—to make a sister's anxious doubts an evidence against her only brother," answered Rosalind with faltering voice and tearful eyes.

"Neither he nor you shall fare the worse for it," replied Mrs. Denham with a manner which if not affectionate, was no longer formal. "Suppose he has other debts—I put it only as a supposition—how is he ever to find the means of discharging them? You have no relative likely to leave you another legacy."

"None. I do not know how it would be accomplished; but doubtless he would find a way. They say we women cannot understand how all these things are done."

"Quite as well perhaps that we should not, if we are to retain any reverence for our lords

and masters; but your own sense will tell you that it must be attended with great loss, or a little dishonour. He will gamble."

"Oh, no! no!" cried Rosalind; then stopped abruptly in her disclaimer, remembering with grief and shame that Michael had spoken of gambling as a means of making money.

"Let us hope that he will not gamble, since it distresses you;—but what other means has he left? He has no land to mortgage, and Captain Trevor's pension dies with him, or the son might count on his father's death and issue bills accordingly."

"Oh, no! that is too horrible!" cried Rosalind with a shudder.

"Then he must rob his parents in their declining years of the few comforts that their limited means allow; or, as I said before, sacrifice his sister, disposing with a despot's grasping spirit of her poor pittance—or her hand."

"No, madam, no; Michael is not selfish—he

will never do either," said, Rosalind but not quite as resolutely as before.

"Then he must persuade a young heiress to give him herself, or an old one her fortune:—he may find neither practicable."

"You assured me, Mrs. Denham, that you purposed only kindness," exclaimed Rosalind colouring with wounded feeling.

"And I do purpose kindness, Rosalind Trevor, however singular you may think my method of showing it. I would warn you for your good—I would urge you for his sake and your own to impress on his mind the necessity of a strict economy, as he would save himself from future remorse. He has many pleasing and amiable qualities, but his self-indulgence will degenerate into selfishness, and he may seek to rule you to your misery, working by your affections. Forgive me for having wounded your sisterly regard—forgive me for having compelled you to enter on a painful discussion, and

that too when so ill able to endure it, for Mrs. Bailey said no more than the truth;—you are looking, and I fear feeling, wretched. It may however repay you in some measure to know that our conference has served, not injured your brother, though I do not wish him to prolong his visit now, or renew it shortly."

"I entreat you to consider—" began Rosalind.

"I will consider all that should be considered, but I will listen to no more excuses or entreaties. Let it content you that your affectionate pleading has not been in vain—to that he must hold himself indebted for any efforts that I may make to serve him."

"May I ask from whom you heard of this hateful debt," said Rosalind timidly, as Mrs. Denham, placing herself at her desk, began to write.

"Through his own carelessness I acquired my knowledge;—he must have dropped the letter, which I found in the shrubbery. The

half having the direction being torn away, I could not tell to whom to restore it till after perusal. Run your eye over it, and you will see that it is neither the first nor the second application; and you will likewise learn what young men tell their sisters are needful military accoutrements."

"If you will permit me, madam, I would rather return it to him unread, since a perusal would be contrary to his wishes, and could give me no pleasure."

"You may do as you please, but the perusal might be serviceable—though painful."

"I would rather not hear evil of those I love."

"My warnings have been thrown away, and it would be waste of time to utter more; you will only learn from experience. Give this to your brother, and let the thought that it is more than I intended to bestow on your first entrance console you for becoming an unwilling

witness against him—he owes much to your sisterly eloquence."

Rosalind took the paper—it was a draft for three hundred pounds.

"How shall I thank you," she said in a broken voice, her eyes filling with tears of gratitude.

"By heeding my words, and believing that kindness may be found beneath a cold exterior. You have wronged me, Rosalind Trevor; like Hester Darley you have said—she will keep her word, but she is a hard woman."

"I have wronged you, and deeply regret it," said Rosalind frankly.

"And worse—you will wrong me again;—but let that pass. The young are rarely wise in their judgment, and I court no one's good opinion. Let your brother's first act be to discharge his debt to Edred—on this I insist; and advise him to employ the remainder in paying his other creditors. Tell him that I desire, and will receive no thanks; and let him

clearly understand that he has nothing further to expect from me. I say this because, though I thought myself a hale and hearty woman likely to live for years, many can read death so legibly written on my brow, that they require me to choose an heir immediately. With this understanding, we may still part on friendly terms, for he has always been gentlemanly and attentive—from what motives I will not enquire. Now go ;—you have been sadly harassed and need rest."

"Let me first thank you," said Rosalind rising.

"No; I will have no thanks from you, or him—mind that. If you would show gratitude be silent—that is all I require."

"If you so will it, so it must be," answered Rosalind, checked and chilled by Mrs. Denham's manner.

"If she would but show a little warmth and sympathy that I might love her!" thought Rosalind as she sought her brother. It was the first wish of the sort she had formed since

their introduction, and seemed likely to remain unfulfilled.

"So I must hope for nothing further—then adieu to my vision of becoming owner of Denham Park. And to lose my chance for a paltry debt of two hundred pounds!—coming to her knowledge too through my own carelessness. I wish Tanner and Company were trampled to death by their own horses! There do not look so grave, my pretty Rose; I do not wish so in earnest, but I am vexed—fretful—and spiteful, and could say anything, or do any thing just at this moment. It is very odd about the letter. I cannot at all remember tearing off the direction, and would almost take my davy that I had put it away safe in my desk, when Cottrell called me to ride with him. To be sure there being no money in the desk it is never locked, but Gunter is as honest as a knave towards himself. Besides, who would think of stealing a dunning letter?"

"Only a rival and foe."

"Rival and foe! What do you mean, Rosalind, speaking in that prophetic tone? You are looking quite Delphic."

"It is a very unlucky accident, and I am almost as vexed and spiteful as yourself," answered Rosalind.

"Yes a most unlucky accident indeed," repeated Michael without noticing his sister's emphasis upon the word, "I suppose I did not put it in the desk, but left it in my pocket, and pulled it out with my handkerchief. But there what must be—must be;—and what can't be cured must be endured. It is odd if two musty old proverbs cannot console one for losing the prospect of a handsome inheritance. Three hundred pounds is better than nothing; but it seems almost a waste to pay two thirds directly to Cottrell, who does not need it."

"Mrs. Denham is peremptory on that point, and insists on its being done immediately," said

Rosalind gravely, beginning to understand the wisdom of her hostess's warning.

"Then it must be done. Lucky fellow! I suppose he will supplant me and become her heir, for the Westons are poor honies, and Wyvill too fitful in his moods, and too inattentive to stand a chance. I hope he may have it since I cannot. Mind, Rose, I shall be at your wedding, though all the manufacturers in all the towns should be fainting with fright."

"Wedding or funeral of mine you shall certainly attend."

"Funeral! don't talk of such a thing, girl; I feel the worms creeping over me at the bare thought. But you are looking very corpse like —what is the matter?"

"I have a horrid head ache, and that long talk with Mrs. Denham, and—"

"And my departure;—yes I see dear, Rose; and you were tired last night. There go to your own room for an hour, whilst I look at a horse sent for my inspection, and then we will

have a nice quiet chat. And do coax Maria to join the party, for her mother has kept her out of my sight all the morning. So much for being a discarded heir."

"Suppose she should be chosen as heiress?"

"Then I would run off with her, let who would say me nay."

"And suppose she should not."

"Then I have had a pleasant flirtation with a very beautiful girl; but in a wife—I must look for fortune."

"You will not break your heart," said Rosalind, dismissing all anxiety upon this point, a slight degree of contempt at his levity mingling unconsciously with her pleasure at his being saved from the pangs of a hopeless attachment.

"No, I am not one of that sort—nor you either, I suspect; but Cottrell is not over sentimental, so it is all as it should be. Now be off to your room, sweet sister, whilst I adjourn to the stable."

Michael was right—Mrs. Weston kept her

beautiful daughter out of his way, to that beautiful daughter's annoyance. She was not going to give her darling Maria to a marching Lieutenant, with little besides his pay. Whilst there was a chance of his becoming the possessor of Denham—it was different;—besides she did not like cousins intermarrying.

She need not have been so cautious; Michael was not sufficiently smitten to try love in a cottage with Maria to cut his bread and butter; and as for Maria—she could not feel a real, lasting affection, and preferred a large house with plenty of servants.

In obedience to her commands, Michael made no attempt to thank Mrs. Denham for her handsome present, but his manner when taking leave showed that, if disappointed in his high hopes, he was still grateful for her kindness; and her manner in return was less formal, and more friendly than some of the party had expected.

Rosalind had borne up against a distracting

headache and contending feelings till Michael's departure; but the effort was too much for her, and as she saw him drive from the door, her head grew dizzy, and she would have fallen to the ground had not Wyvill, who had been some time watching her, caught her in his arms.

"Give her to me! Look up my life! my love!" cried Edred, springing forward; and Rupert yielded her at once without a word, thinking he read in her bewildered glance, as she again half opened her eyes, an anxiety to be freed from his support; and watched over by Cottrell.

By Mrs. Denham's orders Rosalind was immediately taken to her own room, where Mrs. Sewell established herself as head nurse; but in spite of all her affectionate care, and the skill of her medical attendant it was some days ere she could mingle as before with the other guests at Denham Park. Over exertion of mind and body was assigned by her doctor as the cause of her indisposition; but the Westons

and some others attributed it to disappointment at the destruction of her brother's hopes, Mrs. Bailey and Mrs. Sewell to vexation at Michael's sudden departure, and over fatigue from dancing and sitting up with Anne, whilst Mrs. Denham assigned no reason for the illness of her young relative, contenting herself with providing for all her wants, and even forestalling her wishes, as far at least as concerned all delicacies to tempt the appetite, or cool the fevered lips; and in addition to this care she paid her daily visits of enquiry, brief indeed, but not rudely brief, and quite as long as the invalid desired.

Grateful for her handsome gift to Michael, and grateful for her sympathy, slight as it was, during their interview, as well as for her attention during her illness, as soon as her returning strength would permit Rosalind was anxious to express her gratitude to Mrs. Denham, but checked by the cold reception of her first few faltered thanks, the words died on her lips, and

Mrs. Sewell entering at the moment she continued silent and embarrassed.

"She does not desire my thanks—she does not prize my gratitude—she wishes me to understand that like Michael I have nothing to expect. She will be the attentive hostess, but never the confiding friend—she is what she bade me not believe her, a cold-hearted woman, though ever upright, and on some occasions munificent," was Rosalind's thought after one of Mrs. Denham's daily visits. "She cannot love—she does not wish to be loved;—she suspects all around her of interested motives and would mock at the outpourings of a grateful heart;—she shall not hear them," was her concluding resolution, and with such thoughts, and such a closing determination it may well be imagined that her gratitude grew colder and colder, not only in appearance, but in reality, till alternately chilled and irritated by her hostess's unvarying formality, she felt her presence a constraint—her absence a relief. Her

gratitude, such as it was, and never expressed, was cherished as a duty—not enjoyed as an impulse;—she felt that she ought to be grateful, and tried to be so. Who has not felt the pain of such a trial? Who has not suffered from the remorse that fills a generous heart on feeling that it does not love as it is loved, and that it has to compel itself to gratitude?

As to Mrs. Sewell, she was the most kind and indefatigable of nurses, and it would have been a great comfort to the invalid had she been as judicious as kind. In spite of Rosalind's remonstrances, she would sit beside her bed day after day, never leaving her but to take her meals, talking just when Rosalind might have slept, or was desirous of silence—condoling with her on Michael's departure—urging her continually to be more attentive to her hostess, whom she teased when present to give her opinion of the invalid's looks—speculating on the future heir—pronouncing the odds, as matters stood, to be highly in Edred's

favour, and reporting the sayings and doings of the guests with that peculiar talent, which some people possess of reporting just what their hearers would wish not reported, and keeping that back which would be most agreeable.

Alarmed for her young favorite, and thinking it a good opportunity to endeavour to bring about a meeting, and from that she doubted not a reconciliation between the friends of former days, Mrs. Sewell not only suggested, she even pressed the propriety of sending for Mrs. Trevor to nurse her daughter; but Mrs. Denham's displeasure at the proposition was too openly shown by words and manner for the proposer to venture on a recurrence to the subject. This proposal and its rejection formed the matter of one of Mrs. Sewell's reports to Rosalind, and as that good lady felt considerable vexation at the failure of a project from which she had expected so much, her report was not at all favourable to her hostess, whose decided tone and contracted brow as she re-

marked—" that if Miss Trevor required her mother's nursing, she had better return home at once to ensure it;" were, thanks to Mrs. Sewell's disappointment, most graphically depicted, and highly coloured.

" I cannot think what is come to Mrs. Denham: I used to consider her a kind hearted woman, notwithstanding her formal manner, but I really believe she would not invite Mrs. Trevor here if you were on your death bed," concluded Mrs. Sewell in high dudgeon. " She should remember that she is getting older herself every day, and that it is an unchristian thing to die with malice in your heart."

" Malice in her heart! and against my gentle mother, who still loves her so well," thought Rosalind indignantly, though she made no reply in words. " And so if I were dying I must not have that mother beside my bed—must not hold her trembling hand—I must not hear her cheering tones, nor look into her tearful eyes; or if I would—not here at Denham—

not under the roof of the friend of her youth. I must be tended by, and die among comparative strangers, or I must be turned out with an aching head and feeble frame to seek another home. And yet must she make a parade of a daily visit, and the finest fruit in her garden. Pah! I will have none of her fruit—it will set my teeth on edge. Let her keep it for her sycophants—I cannot stoop to bend and flatter. But the money to Michael!"—she continued, pursuing the same train of thought, her cheek flushing, and her hand raised with an involuntary gesture of irritation at the remembrance, "that money!—I wish she had never given it—I feel humiliated at the bare recollection—I ought to be grateful and I cannot. Would that I had never come here! then—" the sentence was broken off; she feared to close it even to her own heart—she feared to be looked at by mortal eye, and buried her glowing face in the cushion of the sofa on which she was reclining.

"Did Mrs. Denham ever love any one?" she asked abruptly after a long silence, her voice sounding hollow, possibly from her position, as her face was still bowed on the cushion.

"Oh yes! she loved your mother very much at one time."

"No; that could not be Mrs. Sewell," exclaimed Rosalind impatiently. "If we once truly love—we love for ever. There is no time in real affection, as far as this life is concerned—it has no existence—or it is an eternity. Nothing save the proved worthlessness of the object of our regard can rend the bonds of affection. She never knew my mother's worth—she never loved her, or she would love her still. Ay, and not only her, but her husband and her children—the veriest trifle that was hers."

"Oh! but she did love her, Rose, for she used to give her magnificent presents."

"Magnificent presents!" repeated Rosalind contemptuously. "What are gold and jewels,

but tinselled nothings?—worthless copper, gilded with the show of affection? Did she give her her heart?"

"To be sure she did. Why she was jealous of her; as jealous as if she had been her lover."

"Oh! that is what I mean. Was Mrs. Denham ever—ever—ever in love, as people call it?"

"As people call it—why what else would you call it."

"Oh! of course what other people call it—I am not going to correct the language of the multitude,"answered Rosalind hurriedly. "But tell me—was Mrs. Denham ever in love?"

"I do not know what to say to that exactly:—perhaps not what you would call in love, but you have such romantic notions on these subjects, that there is no knowing what to make of you sometimes, when you are flying away on some wild fancy; and then again you seem too merry, high spirited and volatile ever

to submit to the bondage of love, as Mr. Wyvill said one day."

"Did Mr. Wyvill say that?" demanded Rosalind quickly, looking up for an instant.

"To be sure he did, or I could not have repeated it. But bless me, my dear!—what a fever you are in! your face is as red as scarlet, and your eyes like burning coals. And not a fever draught left! I will send off to Dr. Jackson directly. It is a singular coincidence, that you had just such an increase of fever the other day, when I was telling you that Mr. Wyvill never asked after you as the others did."

"Nonsense, my dear Mrs. Sewell; I am in no fever at all, only vexed about my mother; so do sit down again," cried Rosalind impatiently, catching hold of her old friend's dress as she was hurrying off to send a messenger to Doctor Jackson.

Rosalind never could stand Mrs. Sewell's

singular coincidences, and this seemed to provoke her more than usual.

"Vexing about your mother. There now I ought not to have told you; but I was vexed myself," said Mrs. Sewell, allowing herself to be detained.

"Don't fret about that, Minny dear; but answer my question," said Rosalind coaxingly, seeing that her old friend was much annoyed at her own imprudence. "And do please to tell me directly, for you know waiting always puts me in a fever."

"Ah, Rose, Rose! you make me do just as you like," cried the old lady, shaking her head reproachfully. "And really as I told you before, I do not know what to say. Perhaps it was more yes, than no—perhaps more no, than yes. With her fortune and beauty, for she really was pretty when young, as you may suppose, she had many wooers, and many offers; but she was always rather silent and

reserved, though not as she is now, and never seemed to favour any, unless it was a Mr. Hulbert, a very fine, lively young man; but just as the world was beginning to put it down as a settled thing, lo and behold! he went and married another young lady. And there could not have been anything in it; for Mrs. Denham not only attended the wedding, but made the bride and bridegroom splendid presents. And some even go so far as to say, that she persuaded the young lady's father, who objected on account of Mr. Hulbert's scanty means, to give his consent to the match. So you see there could not have been anything in it."

"I don't know that," said Rosalind with a deep sigh.

"Nonsense, Rose; no woman would further her lover's union with a rival."

"You wrong your sex by saying so," answered Rosalind loftily, raising her head as she spoke, and showing a face from which the flush of fever had fled, and in which a flashing eye

contrasted fearfully with an ashy cheek. "A true, high-minded woman seeks the happiness of him she loves before her own—she cannot smile if he be sad—nor scarcely weep, if he be gay."

"Not if he be gay with another?"

"No; her being is bound up in his; and till a duty break the bonds, she has no separate interests."

"Rosalind! Rosalind! I do believe you are mad," exclaimed poor Mrs. Sewell, staring at her in amazement. "Here you are flying away."

"On a broomstick," added Rosalind.

"Just exactly so," assented Mrs Sewell, half vexed, and half amused.

"You are always thinking that every body else is as romantic as yourself. Mrs. Denham is not a person of that sort."

"No, you are right there; Mrs. Denham is not a person of that sort," answered Rosalind with some bitterness.

"Well; and all the better too; I see no good in flying through the air on a broomstick; —much better remain and sweep the pavements on earth—it is much more useful," cried Mrs. Sewell pettishly.

"Much more useful," said Rosalind, as her old friend thought contemptuously.

"Yes, much more useful—I repeat it. As for you, Rose, I don't know what is come to you of late. There is something about you that I do not understand. Even your gaiety that used to be always the same is now like a bonfire on the fifth of November—all in a blaze one moment—and all in a smother the next. Not a minute ago you were as red as my grandmother's scarlet petticoat with the gold fringe that she used to wear in the winter; and now you are just like one of the marble statues in the gallery, Diana, or Cupid, or some of them, looking so white and stony, only with two burning coals in your head by way of eyes. I do believe you are mad, Rosalind."

"You have guessed it, Minny; and so depart if you would not be bitten, for I am in a very snappish mood, and the fit is increasing in violence."

"I cannot tell whether you are in jest or in earnest with that strange smile, that is not a smile," said Mrs. Sewell looking bewildered.

"Quite in earnest, Minny; but I shall not bite you—that is if you keep out of my way, so, as snapping is not ladylike, please to vanish, and I will try to sleep."

"But I don't like to leave you whilst in this way, my dear."

"Then I must turn you out Minny;—there is no alternative. I shall be very good and tractable when you come back," cried Rosalind, and throwing her arms round Mrs. Sewell, before that lady guessed her purpose, she fairly gallopaded her out of the room, then bolting the door sank exhausted on the sofa, burying her face in the cushion as before.

Mrs. Sewell listened for some time in the

corridor, then hearing nothing to alarm her joined the party in the drawing-room, cheering herself with the idea that Rosalind's returning spirits were a proof of returning health, notwithstanding her fitful humour. On re-entering her charge's room some three hours after, she found Rosalind as good and tractable as she had promised to be, and doubly affectionate to atone, as she said, for her late wayward mood.

CHAPTER. VII.

"WINTER is gone—spring has returned—and earth is again all loveliness," exclaimed Edred Cottrell, advancing eagerly towards Rosalind as she entered the breakfast room at Denham for the first time since her illness.

"A very poetical greeting, cousin mine," replied Rosalind jestingly, but as he took both her hands, and looked into her face to mark what ravages suffering had made, a faint blush came into her pallid cheek, and her jesting smile departed.

"There is a poetry of the heart as well as of the lips," said Edred earnestly, a little hurt as it seemed at her gay rejoinder.

"Oh! yes, there are a thousand sorts of poetry, but I have made up my mind that it is much safer to keep to plain prose. Mrs. Sewell has been lecturing me on riding through the air on a broomstick, and recommends my sweeping the pavements, so I intend to be very earthly, and useful, and unpoetical for the future."

"Will you not hear me tell you how I have longed for your return among us?" asked Edred bending towards her, so that his earnest whisper might be heard by her, and her alone.

"No indeed, cousin Edred; I have not patience for that," replied Rosalind gaily, releasing her hand and speaking aloud. "You know I never could abide a twice told tale, and cousin Terry has just been telling me how deeply my absence has been deplored by all, settling the folds of his stock the while, that he

might thus do greater honor to my reappearance."

"To be sure; as if we had not all longed for your presence as much as Cottrell," said Mr. Adnam, shaking hands with his lively young friend, as he called her. "There is Wyvill has been as dull as a dormouse in the winter ever since your illness."

"That is, contented and happy—dozing away his peaceful hours."

"No such thing, Miss Trevor. Not at all peaceful, and not at all happy, but restless, fidgety, or gloomy."

"Very like a dormouse in the winter indeed," observed Rosalind archly. "A just and exquisite simile."

"Ah! there now, you always quarrel with my similes, and never believe me when I repeat any of Wyvill's pretty sayings," said Mr. Adnam rather petulantly. "Come, Wyvill, do leave off picking that poor rose to pieces, and tell

Miss Trevor how much you have mourned her illness."

"Miss Trevor has not patience to listen to a twice told tale, and I should be sorry to bore her with the history of my feelings," answered Rupert coldly, resisting Mr. Adnam's endeavour to drag him forward.

"You are enough to vex a duck pond into a passion, Wyvill, answering in that cold studied manner, when called on to pay a lady a compliment; and it is more provoking when I know how eloquent you can be on all subjects when the fit is on you; but I will have my revenge, and disturb that dignified demeanour. You know I caught you twice lingering in the corridor near Miss Trevor's door to catch the first intelligence of her amendment," cried the old gentleman triumphantly. "I won't spare you, I can tell you, though you are blushing now like a girl of sixteen. What were you in the corridor for?"

"Taking a sketch of Sir Marmaduke Denham,

who accompanied Edward the First to the holy wars. You may see the sketch in my portfolio up stairs."

"Pooh! Pooh! that is only an excuse," muttered Mr. Adnam, vexed at the general laugh which succeeded Rupert's quiet and satisfactory reply. "And I suppose it was for Sir Marmaduke that you galloped all over the country in search of finer grapes than Denham could produce," he added, hoping to retrieve his cause.

"I sought those grapes at Mrs. Denham's request, as you may ascertain by enquiry," answered Rupert in the same steady tone.

"You are done, Mr. Adnam! done up! done brown!" cried Richard Weston, enjoying that gentleman's annoyance.

"If these were your real motives, you should not have been so rude as to avow them," observed Mr. Adnam in a pet. "If I were you, Miss Trevor, I would quarrel with him for his want of gallantry."

"I neither wish nor expect gallantry from Mr. Wyvill," answered Rosalind as coldly as Rupert himself.

"Foiled again, Mr. Adnam; cannot get up a match—or a fight," cried Richard tauntingly.

"Who told you that I wanted to get up either? I would only bring Miss Trevor and Wyvill into contact like flint and steel, in the hope of eliciting fire."

"In the hopes of creating a flame—I said so," cried Richard.

"I do not know whether you mean me for the flint or the steel, but I do not feel very much gratified by either comparison," remarked Rosalind colouring.

"I too must protest against the comparison, since, notwithstanding your exclamation against my want of gallantry, I neither wish to strike, nor come into collision with Miss Trevor," said Rupert.

"Capital! now you have got into a scrape with both. You had better hold your tongue

—you only get deeper into the mire," cried Richard Weston.

"So it seems; there is no pleasing Miss Trevor or Wyvill. They are neither satisfied with me nor themselves, I suspect; so they must go their own way and keep up a guerilla warfare, instead of—"

"Having a pitched battle as you desire," added Richard interrupting him.

"Well, that might be better, and then the conquered one must submit."

"I am to be conquered by none but myself; and am resolved to keep that self under a stern rule," observed Rosalind proudly.

"Is it always possible to keep such a resolution?" asked Rupert in a tone which Rosalind considered an intimation that she could not—an insinuation which she considered impertinent."

"I will try to do so at least," she answered haughtily.

"You take a lofty flight, and would strike at a noble quarry, Miss Trevor."

"Such is my custom, Mr. Wyvill."

"I shall be contented to strike at that chicken on the side-table, being neither hawk nor heron to indulge in lofty flights," cried Richard Weston.

"And I will be your 'squire in the attack," said Edred, who had been a silent, but not inattentive listener to all that had passed. "Breakfast is ready, I see, so let us take our places. Do not sit there Rosalind, you will be in a draught; come round here."

"Nonsense; there is no draught at all;—stay by me, Miss Trevor," said Mr. Adnam, who had contrived to place her between himself and Wyvill; but Mrs. Sewell joining in a declaration against the draught, Rosalind went round to the other side in compliance with Edred's suggestion, who thus secured her for his neighbour, whilst as if to repay this attention to his wishes, he devoted himself to helping and amusing her, in both of which occupations Richard showed a great inclination to assist

him. Not having seen Rosalind for some days she was a novelty, and as such attractive.

"Let me give you some more chicken, Rosalind," he said, replenishing his own plate for the third time.

"No, I thank you; I have been crammed enough for one meal."

"Not crammed at all—you won't get strong if you don't eat, and I want you to be up to fun, and keep us alive as you did before your illness, for, compliment apart, we have been quite dull in your absence. We have had nothing to amuse us—positively nothing but Wyvill's gallant exploit of rescuing a dog with a tin canister tied on to its tail. Oh! that was a capital scene! And Cottrell made a capital story of it; as good, or better than roasting the potatoes for that crabbed old woman."

"What was the story?" asked Rosalind.

"Wyvill's groom and some mischievous boys seized on an ugly wretch of a terrier, tied a canister on to its tail, and then hunting it

round in a circle would not let it get out. If you had but seen the animal's terror every time the canister rattled, and heard the lamentations and squalling of the little girl to whom it belonged, you would have died with laughing."

"I doubt it," replied Rosalind gravely. "But is that all?"

"That all? Oh, dear no! that is not half—the best is to come. Wyvill, who chanced to be riding by, dashing into the ring caught up the snapping cur—cut off the canister—restored the animal to the sobbing girl, and then pronounced an harangue about humanity, manly feeling and so forth that would have made Demosthenes envious—and this to a parcel of gaping, country boobies. As if boys had not tied canisters on to dogs' tails before now; and as if they would not do it again hereafter. Why it is their vocation. But I make nothing of the story; you should have heard Cottrell tell it—we were in fits of laughter—all but Wyvill himself, and he seemed to mind

our mirth so little that you would have thought we had been laughing at somebody else. By the bye, Wyvill, is it true that you mean to part with your groom in consequence ?"

"Quite true."

"Well, that is one of the best things I ever heard!" cried Richard bursting into a horse laugh. "Part with a smart clever groom because he tied a tin canister on to a cur's tail!"

"Because he took pleasure in inflicting pain on a dog and a child—the first one of the most faithful friends of man—the second sacred from its helplessness. How can I in common humanity intrust him with my horses after that ? Besides he chose to defend the act, or I might have pardoned it."

"That is he remained untouched by your eloquence, which was a great wickedness undoubtedly, and deserves a great punishment. You will become famous soon for helping all the little dirty ugly girls in the county; your name will be in every body's mouth—in fact it

is so already, from another adventure. Do you know that the assizes come on next week, and that Todd persists in his action about the horse?"

"I am aware of both those circumstances."

"Do you also know that the tide is running against you; and that the general opinion is in favor of the plaintiff, instead of the defendant?"

"I heard you say so the other day."

"I say no more than the truth: ask Cottrell if it is not as I say."

"Indeed it is, Wyvill; and you really had better hush up the matter. The trial will certainly go against you; or, if not, your principal witness being your own servant, the suspicious may hint at bribery."

"No one who knows Rupert Wyvill will suspect him of bribery," replied Rupert indignantly, roused by the insinuation.

"You are not generally lavish of your money, I admit; but on such an occasion the malicious may suspect you of extravagance, so,

as I said before, if you would not have a verdict against you, besides costs and what not to pay, hush up the matter immediately, for I hear Todd's case is very strong."

"I scorn the advice, and understand the motives of the adviser," answered Rupert, fixing a flashing eye on the speaker. "My honor is at stake; and if the payment of costs would beggar me, still should I persist. The horse when sold was sound, or I can rank no longer among honorable men."

"Oh! as for the horse's soundness—that is as it may be. I told you at the time that I did not like the action of the off leg behind. Depend upon it my advice is good, and my motives friendly; if you will not take warning I cannot help it—I have done all in my power to get you out of a scrape."

"It is the first time in your life then," said Rupert pointedly.

"A wilful man must have his own way," observed Edred carelessly, shrugging his shoul-

ders. "Since you persist in standing the trial, of course you have engaged Drew as your counsel; he is a capital hand to win a bad cause, and always gets his client through triumphantly thanks to his impudence and clever cross questioning. He will make nine witnesses out of ten contradict themselves, and swear that black is white; and that merely from bewildering, and brow beating them. He is employed in all doubtful cases where assurance is needed."

"Then let Todd have the benefit of his abilities, I rely on the justice of my cause, not on the impudence of my counsel, and his power of brow beating and confusing witnesses; —the verdict in my favor shall be honestly obtained, as I trust it will be honestly given. I have already engaged young Hardy for the defence."

"Young Hardy! Is not this his first circuit?" asked Richard Weston.

"Yes; and mine will probably be his first brief."

"You had better have a practised counsel. He will stand no chance against Drew, who is such an acute cross questioner, and not at all scrupulous as to what he says or does."

"As I said before, I depend on the justice of my cause, not the unscrupulousness of my counsel, and I know Hardy to be clever, honorable and zealous:—we are old friends."

"You must do as you please, but I should say with Cottrell, compromise the affair, or engage Drew."

"Yes, you must engage Drew. I insist upon it, being as old a friend as Hardy," exclaimed Mr. Adnam. "A monstrous deal depends on the skill and experience of the counsel in all cases, but especially in a horse case, where there is always such contradictory, and often such lying evidence. A young barrister asks what he should not ask, and brings out into full relief what should be kept in shadow, showing the weakest point by dwelling injudiciously upon it. Yes, yes, you must have Drew."

"Excuse me, Mr. Adnam, but your very arguments decide me against complying with your wishes. There are no weak points in my case, for I stand on the firm ground of honor. There are no questions which Hardy may not ask—there is nothing which I wish kept in shadow—nothing that I object to being brought into the fullest light. The more keenly the subject is investigated, the more fully shall I be cleared from the charge of deceiving intentionally, or unintentionally, by a false warranty. I can understand Cottrell's conduct, and appreciate his motives, but I cannot comprehend how you, who have known me from my childhood, and are a sincere friend, as I believe, can suspect me of dishonor. In what transaction of my whole life have I played the rogue, that you now set me down as a knave?" exclaimed Rupert indignantly.

"I set you down as a knave, Wyvill! I know you to be the very soul of honor, and would stake my life on that honor, though all

the world should bear witness against you. If I thought I saw you steal, and you declared on your honor that you had not stolen—I would believe your word rather than the evidence of my own senses."

"Thank you for this testimony," exclaimed Rupert warmly, his eyes glistening at his old friend's words.

"You had better summon Adnam to speak as to character," observed Edred sarcastically; but Rupert either did not hear, or would not reply to the comment.

"Your honor is not in question," said Mr. Adnam. "You may be perfectly in the right—your adversary a villain—and his witnesses perjured; and yet, thanks to the uncertainty of law, and the stupidity or prejudices of a jury, a verdict may be obtained against you; and all owing to the want of knowledge or experience—impudence or eloquence of your counsel. No, no; none of your high flown notions here—this is a point of practice not theory, and must

be conducted according to the ways of this world, sinful though it be. Set a rogue to catch a rogue—so Drew must be employed."

"Not by me—I leave him to thank you for the compliment. I will trust to a just cause—a zealous, honorable advocate, and a jury of my countrymen. It is of no use to argue the point further as I am resolved."

"Then there is no use in wasting words, for if you once speak in that tone I know nothing on earth can move you; but this I will say, you deserve to suffer for your obstinacy. I tell you again, as I have told you a thousand times before, these lofty notions will never do in the present state of the world—whether they would have succeeded before the flood I do not pretend to determine," cried Mr. Adnam in a pet.

"Nor I either, my dear sir, Noah having left no record on the subject; but I am inclined to suspect that lofty notions prospered no better then than in the present day."

"So this is your real, sober belief; and yet you are always up in the clouds. I tell you what, Rupert Wyvill, you will never win a fortune!"

"Then I must learn to be contented without one."

"Ay, ay, very fine talking!—but what is more—you will never win a wife."

"Then I must remain a bachelor."

"Remain a bachelor indeed! I hope if you do, that you will be tormented with rheumatism, gout and asthma—smoky chimneys and dishonest servants."

"Poor me! I shall bespeak doctor, nurse, and easy chair in anticipation," said Rupert good humouredly, laughing at his friend's unusual petulance.

"When are the assizes to take place?" enquired Miss Bailey.

"Next week. Should you like to go?" asked Richard, including in his question Miss Bailey and Rosalind.

"Yes, of all things!" cried both who had never been in a court of justice in their lives.

"Then we can arrange it—can't we my dear Mrs. Denham? I think there is a sheriff's gallery, or some such thing."

"Yes; I will write to the high sheriff immediately, and have no doubt that he will be able to secure us comfortable seats," replied that lady promptly.

That Mrs. Denham would think of going had never entered Richard's head, or the imagination of any of her guests, but of course, since she announced her intention of forming one of the party, he expressed all proper pleasure at her so doing.

"We will go the day of Wyvill's trial. It will be fine fun to watch his face during Drew's speech, and his cross-examination of the witnesses."

"Almost as much fun as tying a tin canister on to a poor dog's tale," observed Rupert with a smile.

"Perhaps you had better fix some other day; Wyvill might feel awkward should the verdict be against him," suggested Cottrell considerately.

"If I lose, your presence will not make my feelings more painful," said Rupert, speaking to Richard Weston rather than Cottrell.

"And if you win, as I am sure you ought to do, it will be so pleasant to your friends to witness your triumph, and offer their congratulations on the instant," observed Mrs. Sewell, who had kindly sympathies for every one. "I am sure I shall be delighted to join the party, for I was never in a court of justice but once, somewhere in the west; and it is a singular coincidence that my second partner at my third ball, was a barrister, and a son of one of the judges."

"Then that is settled; but what are we to do to-day? Walk, ride, or drive?" exclaimed Richard Weston, who had a horror of poor Mrs. Sewell's coincidences. "Suppose we walk to

Balder Cliffs, as the sun shines so brightly. What say you, Rosalind."

"I must forbid Rosalind's taking so long a walk for some days to come," cried Mrs. Sewell in a fright.

"Do not be in a fuss, my dear, kind nurse, I am not going to be imprudent," observed Rosalind with a smile; "but I beg that my absence may not detain others. There will be a large party without me," she added glancing round.

"I too must decline the invitation, having business elsewhere," said Rupert.

"A visit to the lady of Drinkbourne:—I understand!" cried Richard Weston with a knowing wink.

"And I must ride over to C. about my gun," said Edred.

"Then we had better defer the walk for a few days till Rosalind has grown stronger, and you gentlemen are more at leisure."

So it was decided without further debate,

and the party dispersed—some to one occupation, some to another.

Rosalind's strength came back, and with it some of her roses, but her spirits seemed at times to flag, and she grew fonder every day of wandering about in the shrubberies by herself, instead of joining her cousins in their walks and drives. Her brother was no longer there to smile approval of her lively sallies, and she required rest and the fresh air to invigorate her enfeebled frame; so, for the next week she roamed about in solitude, or only accompanied by Anne, now mending fast, and glad of a quiet ramble. She was still gay when compelled to mingle in society—but never sought it.

It was a lovely summer evening, and dinner having been earlier than usual to accommodate Mr. Adnam and Mr. Bailey, who took their departure immediately after its conclusion, Rosalind determined on paying a visit to Hester Darley of whom she had heard no-

thing since her illness. The walk was too long for Anne who had been out in the morning, so she started alone without naming her intention to any one, for fear of being worried by opposition or companions, neither of which she desired. The next day she was to attend the assizes, and she smiled as she passed along at the remembrance of Mr. Adnam's vociferous lamentations at being compelled to leave the neighbourhood the evening before, his vexation being the greater, on account of Wyvill's having persisted in only retaining Hardy as his counsel, whilst Todd had, as expected, engaged Mr. Drew to conduct his cause.

To avoid fatigue and the falling dew, Rosalind had intended to return early, but the air was so very refreshing, and the scenery so lovely that she loitered by the way, so that when she reached the cottage it was later than she had anticipated. Then the old woman was seized with such a fancy to talk about

Wyvill, who had paid her many visits, and the young girl wished so much to exhibit her improvement in reading, that she was detained much longer than she had expected.

Her road lay through the dell, the scene of Rupert's meeting with the child and her pitcher, and as Rosalind wound her way amid the bushes that clothed the opposite side, she was startled by hearing voices before her. She paused for an instant, then advancing more cautiously, peeped round a thicket at the speakers.

She was no coward, but she had heard that men of evil habits were lurking about in the neighbourhood, and the spot where she stood was lonely, and well fitted for concealment. To retrace her steps would lengthen her walk, so she preferred reconnoitering, instead of returning at once, hoping to find her apprehensions groundless. Her light step had not disturbed those she watched, and they

continued their conversation unconscious of her presence, and in a tone that enabled her to hear nearly all that was said.

One of the men, who stood nearly fronting her, was a stranger of an unprepossessing appearance, with the dress and bearing of a small farmer, or upper labourer—the face of the other she could not distinguish, as he was leaning with his back against a tree, and turned towards his companion; but his voice struck her as being familiar to her ear, and she listened eagerly to catch his words.

"Then you have seen him, and understand exactly what you are to say," observed the person leaning against the tree.

"But suppose I should get into trouble for doing this," replied the other in a dogged tone. "I did not choose to undertake it with only his word to trust to. Will you give me your promise in writing, sir, to stand by me if I gets into a mess?"

"How are you to get into a mess, but

through your own folly? Do as you have said you will do—carry it through, as it ought to be carried through, and the gold shall be yours. You have gone too far to recede—he runs the same risk; and I thought you had settled all between you."

"Ay, it is very well for him—he wants revenge; but I should have more."

"You should—a rope for that affair in Tidwell wood. You forget yourself."

"Hush!" cried the first speaker warningly, alarmed as it appeared by a rustling near Rosalind, who startled by the same noise looked hastily round.

Within a few steps, but a little to the right, she could distinguish, peering through the bushes, a pair of keen dark eyes that to her fancy seemed staring fiercely at her. A thrill of horror shot across her, and for a minute she seemed fascinated by their wild gaze. When she turned again towards the speakers they were gone, but those glaring eyes were still

fixed upon her. She paused for an instant, doubtful what course to pursue; then, bounding down the steep and back across the dell with the timid speed of a frightened fawn, she hastened towards the house by another path—longer, but less lonely than the one she had first taken.

"Where have you been, fair coz? Mrs. Sewell is in a fidget at your remaining out so late, and I too would chide you for risking the health of one so dearly prized, if I might venture to say so," said Edred, advancing to meet Rosalind as she reached the terrace before the house.

Flurried with her speed, and nervous from her late alarm, Rosalind started as he addressed her, gazing keenly on him for a moment, then recovering her self-possession answered gaily.

"I have been with Hester Darley: now question for question, cousin Edred,—where have you been?"

"First writing a letter for Mrs. Denham in my own room; and lastly flirting with her and Mrs. Sewell on the lawn."

Rosalind's eye was on him whilst he spoke; but look and tone were alike steady—no faltering in either; and turning away with a bewildered air she proceeded towards her apartment to take off her bonnet.

In answer to Mrs. Sewell's reproaches for being out so late, she pleaded as excuse the talkative mood of the old woman; but she said not a word of those whom she had encountered, nor her seeking another path in consequence.

CHAPTER VIII.

"SUPPOSE you take this seat, Miss Trevor; it commands a good view of the judge, barristers, and witness box," said Mrs. Denham, making room for Rosalind beside herself at the end of a bench in the gallery at the assize court at C.

The offer was thankfully accepted, though Rosalind was as much surprised as pleased at its having been made, as her hostess had shown her little attention since her reappearance in the drawing-room, not even latterly enquiring

after her health. The proffered seat, besides commanding a good view of the court, had another, and, in Rosalind's eyes, nearly equal advantage—she was without a neighbour on one side, and had only her silent hostess on the other; and it was a something worthy of congratulation, the being saved from the silly remarks of the Baileys, or the vulgar comments of Richard Weston, who would otherwise most probably have sat next her, as Mrs. Sewell and Maria were prevented from joining the party by slight indisposition. But if she had no one beside her to make troublesome observations on herself or others, there was one just behind ready to give every requisite information, and ever on the watch to note her feelings and anticipate her wishes—this was Edred Cottrell.

The judge was summing up another case when the Denham party entered, and Rosalind had time ere the jury delivered their verdict to look about, and mark the peculiarities of a scene so entirely new to her. She noticed the

judge with his wig and coif, and struck with his intelligent countenance, and clear address, felt satisfied that justice would be rendered to the innocent in the approaching trial, forgetting that the verdict must be given by the jury, and should be founded on the testimony of the witnesses. The barristers, who sat fronting the judge, were some looking over their briefs, some leaning on the backs of the benches before them, quite lost in thought, or nearly lost in sleep; others conversing in a very low tone, or writing and despatching notes conveyed by means of a long cleft stick held by one of the officers of the court, or more summarily thrown at the persons to whom they were addressed.

Among those engaged in looking over his brief was one of a more than usually youthful and prepossessing appearance. He was seated on the front row, as if expecting to be soon called on to plead, whilst close behind him sat Rupert Wyvill, who occasionally addressed him in a very low tone. Without a question Rosa-

lind settled that this must be Mr. Hardy; and she was right. She scrutinised his features—she tried to read his character, and after gazing on him for some moments decided that he had zeal and ability; but she doubted his self-possession, for the hand shook that held the brief, and there was a nervous working of the mouth that intimated to her a distrust of his own powers.

She turned to Wyvill—his face was pale, but its expression calm and dignified; and though she could not catch his whispered words, she fancied him striving to inspire his young counsel with a greater confidence in himself and cause.

She glanced along the line of barristers in front, having been told that there she must look for the most distinguished, and after a little hesitation fixed upon one whom she decided to be Mr. Drew; and again did some secret instinct lead her right.

The more she looked at him, the more de-

termined grew her dislike. His small black, and snake-like eyes—his swarthy complexion —his full lips, curling back from his white teeth, were all noticed and condemned. Then his wig she fancied was put on in an impertinent manner, and his short thick figure was vulgarity epitomised. In short she looked and criticised, till the poor, unhappy barrister was convicted in her mind, without the intervention of judge or jury, or the production of a single witness against him, of all the bad qualities and evil propensities under the sun. She would not even grant him good temper, which was allowed by all to be one of his attributes, and when her conscience whispered that she was ruled by prejudice, she silenced the accusation by saying—" We should not judge uncharitably, but there are some people from whom we shrink with instinctive dislike." A very current excuse for a sudden disgust, but allowable only to our sex, who are charged, I

will not say truly or untruly, with jumping at conclusions.

"What a variety of faces!" remarked Edred, leaning forward to point out the crowded court.

Rosalind glanced at the multitude below, but there was not one in all that mass of human beings who had power to interest her at that moment; and her attention was again riveted on Rupert and his young friend.

The judge concluded the summing up, and the sudden silence roused Rosalind from a painful reverie, into which she had unconsciously fallen.

"Have you been struck deaf, or dumb, or both?" questioned Edred, again bending forward. "Three times have I asked how you would decide in this case."

"One cannot listen and talk too;—I should decide for the defendant of course," answered Rosalind quickly.

"Then you would decide that black is white

—never was there a clearer case for the plaintiff."

"Many men of many minds," said Rosalind, colouring slightly, displeased at her cousin's tone, and not choosing to admit that she had heard none of the latter part of the judge's address to the jury. "I was never in a court before," she added, "so do not expect me to talk; I find sufficient employment in hearing and seeing."

A verdict for the plaintiff having confirmed Edred's opinion, Todd versus Wyvill was proclaimed by the crier of the court, and a new jury was called and sworn, a jury by chance, or design composed almost entirely of farmers, friends or acquaintances of Todd, as Wyvill's attorney whispered to Hardy.

"Never mind! The jury might be all Todds if he wished it," answered Rupert.

All was new to Rosalind—all was interesting; and so completely was she absorbed in observing the progress of the trial that she

never guessed how great a source of amusement she was to the idle barristers below from her eager curiosity, and animated beauty. They stared at her, but she never remarked it—they criticised her, but she never guessed it—they sketched her yet she never saw it.

Mr. Drew's opening speech was lengthy and tedious as usual. In it he described the plaintiff as the most injured, and the defendant as the most dishonest of men, asserting that he could prove the horse, warranted as sound and valuable, to have been subject to lameness, and in fact of little worth, calling on the jury by their verdict not only to indemnify his client for the price paid for the animal, and all subsequent expences, of keep and medical attendance, but to show that the honest yeomanry of England were not to be trampled on by those ranking themselves with the aristocracy, thus adroitly enlisting the prejudices of the jury against the defendant in favor of one of their own class.

It could not be pleasant to Wyvill to hear himself thus openly accused, in the hearing of hundreds, of acting the part of a swindler, for, should the charge be proved against him, he would deserve no other name; but, aware of the licence taken by barristers under the plea of duty to their clients, he bore Mr. Drew's accusations with tolerable equanimity, his kindling eye alone revealing what he felt.

His speech concluded, Mr. Drew proceeded to examine his witnesses, who were to establish beyond doubt all his asseverations; but for a time the result did not appear likely to answer his expectations.

First, witnesses were called to prove the sale of the horse to Todd for eighty pounds, and Wyvill's positive warranty of soundness—soundness not only present but past, he having declared that the animal had never been lame whilst in his possession, save for a week from having run a nail into its foot, on which Mr. Hardy intimated that it was only waste of time

to adduce further evidence on that point, as his client admitted the warranty to be as full as a warranty could be. Then came Todd's groom, and a labouring man sometimes employed in the stables, to prove that the horse was lame on the morning after its purchase, and had never since been fit for use; and to these succeeded the veterinary surgeon, who had attended the animal, and who spoke very learnedly as to the nature of the lameness, and the improbability of its ever being sound, giving it as his decided opinion, nay conviction, that the lameness must have been of long continuance, though seemingly cured at the time of sale.

The groom and labouring man admitted on cross examination that they had not seen the horse on the night of its arrival, their master having himself put it into the stable, as he often did when returning late from fair or market; but at what time they could not tell, as wearied with a hard day's work they had gone early to bed.

"Todd often returned very late from fair or market—sometimes sober—sometimes not; and when the latter, instead of keeping the high road, was apt to ride across the country, and take desperate leaps."

These two last admissions were made very reluctantly, and both denied any knowledge of their master's having taken a desperate leap that night, and persisted in the belief that he was sober, though they could bring no proof in corroboration of their belief, except that he had groomed the horse, and locked the stable door, which he was not in the habit of doing, a circumstance which, from being unusual, told in favor of the defendant, rather than the plaintiff.

The veterinary surgeon too declined swearing positively that the horse must have been subject to lameness before being placed under his care, though he still maintained the probability of such a fact; nor would he positively

assert that the present lameness might not have arisen from a severe recent strain.

Two young neighbouring farmers deposed to having told Todd, whilst riding part of the way home together, that his new horse was lame; but after a little cross questioning they were compelled to allow, however willing since to claim the merit of a keen judgment, that their words had at the time been only meant for jest and banter. They stood firm as to Todd's having been sober whilst with them; but as he had declared his intention, when parting with them, of stopping at the Black Swan on his road home, about some corn, and they themselves allowed that they had been drinking hard, the fact of Todd's sobriety was far from being established by their testimony. True the landlord of the Black Swan, where he stopped as he had proposed, denied his being tipsy; but then he admitted his being fresh, and when questioned as to how much he sup-

posed he might have drunk, named such an unreasonable quantity that the persons crowding the court were in fits of laughter, and the word fresh seemed likely to become a bye word with the good people of C. for a long time to come. One other witness was called, who had fancied that there might be, rather than observed that there was, a little stiffness in the off leg behind, at the time of sale; and who confirmed the statement of the horse's present worthlessness; and there the case for the prosecution closed, with the exception of another witness, who swore to the horse's having been lame when bought in the near leg before, which caused great amusement to the court, and some little annoyance to Mr. Drew, who closed the examination as speedily as possible.

Never was there a weaker case for the plaintiff—even Rosalind could discover this. Not one of the virulent accusations against the defendant had been proved—not one seemed likely to be proved; and had the case gone as

it was to the jury the plaintiff might have been defeated. Had Mr. Drew been the defendant's counsel, he might have declined to call any witnesses, grounding his defence on his adversary's weakness; but Hardy was young and inexperienced, moreover a little elated by the credit gained from his skilful cross questioning, and Wyvill, still writhing under the charges made in the opening speech, resolved to make assurance doubly sure; not only would he win a verdict in his favor—but not the shadow of a doubt should rest upon his honor.

It is an error common to people of warm temperaments to seek to prove too much—not that we would blame Wyvill in this case—he was right to be sensitive on a point touching his truth.

Mr. Drew did not appear at all annoyed at the non-establishment of his case; on the contrary, he wore a look of great self-satisfaction; but then it is one of the accomplishments of a barrister always to look certain of success, and

as Mr. Drew made no chivalric profession of espousing his client's cause from warmth of regard—his affection for his said client being ever regulated by the amount of the fee—and his success too general to make a single defeat of importance, no presage as to the issue of the trial could be gathered from his demeanour.

Encouraged by the result of the cross questioning, and the prospect of ultimate triumph to himself and his friend, young Hardy, after a clear and fluent speech, in which he pointed out the absence of all proof in support of the charges made against his client by Mr. Drew, and retorted those charges on the defendant, began the examination of his witnesses with a feeling of confidence in his own abilities, which promised to give those abilities fair play, and establish him at once in general estimation as a person likely to obtain high honors in his profession.

Wyvill cast one hurried glance towards the Sheriff's gallery. Was he mistaken, or, notwithstanding their constant tilting, did Rosalind

share in his triumph? A whisper from his attorney recalled his attention, and when he looked towards the gallery again, Miss Trevor's head was turned away.

The first two witnesses for the defence were servants of Mrs. Denham's, who swore that the horse had been perfectly sound whilst standing in the stables at Denham Park, but the shortness of that period—not quite a week—rendered their testimony of less value than it would otherwise have been. A groom of Mr. Adnam's deposed to the same effect, with the addition that he considered the horse to have been fully worth the eighty pounds for which it had been sold, having heard a larger sum offered for it some months before, when Wyvill had been staying with his master, at which time he could swear to the animal's being free from all lameness or stiffness.

Though hard pressed by Mr. Drew, and teased with trying and bewildering questions, he wavered in none of these particulars, but was at last obliged to admit, in answer to a point blank query, that he had once lately

heard Wyvill's servant say, or rather hint, that the horse had been lame at some former period though his master did not like to allow it. When re-examined on this point by Hardy, he declared that he did not believe what Wyvill's servant had said, who appeared to be speaking in jest.

Several persons deposed to Todd's freshness, as the landlord of the Black Swan had delicately termed it, even before his leaving the fair, and to his having ridden the animal wildly about the town to show it off, as well as to his habit of taking a course across the country when excited by drinking, and leaping over every thing that came in his way.

A second veterinary surgeon, contrary to the first, denied the probability of former lameness, and assigned a violent strain as the sole cause of the animal's present unfitness for use; nor could all Mr. Drew's cross questioning cause him to waver in his judgment.

The hopes of the defendant and his young

counsel rose higher and higher—they amounted almost to certainty—the remaining evidence would confirm the impression already made on judge, jury, and listeners, and prove that the buyer was the swindler, not the seller.

The next witness was Wyvill's servant, a good looking young man, who entered the box, with a bustling air; but it was observed by some that his cheek grew pale as he took the oath to tell the truth—the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It was also observed that he never glanced towards Wyvill, perhaps to avoid the suspicion of gathering hints for his words from his master's looks.

The first few questions—mere preliminaries—he answered readily and clearly. "He had been three years in Wyvill's service—he knew the horse that had been sold to Todd—it had been in his master's possession two years, and he had been in the habit of grooming it during that period."

"And it has never been lame during those two years?" asked Mr. Hardy.

"That is rather a leading question of my learned brother's," remarked Mr. Drew in a careless tone, tapping the floor with his right foot and resting his face on his left hand, whilst the pen was held suspended in the other.

"I will word it differently;—my client wishes that even his adversaries shall admit the justice of the verdict in his favor. Was the horse lame during the time that he was in your master's possession?"

Jonathan Stebbing, for such was the groom's name, looked up, and looked down—stood first on one foot, and then on the other, and finally stammered out—"Nothing to speak of."

Mr. Drew glanced at the jury as much as to say—attend;—meaning looks were exchanged between many in court, and the general interest in the trial increased a thousandfold.

Young Hardy turned, in his surprise, to

Wyvill, who said loud enough for some to hear. "Question him closely. I have nothing to keep back."

Reassured by this answer, the young counsel proceeded boldly with the examination.

"What do you mean by nothing to speak of?"

"Why nothing to speak of," repeated the man doggedly.

"Was the horse lame at all during that period?"

The groom hesitated, and fidgeted. Mr. Drew, slightly raising his head from the paper before him, glanced at the witness, who faltered out—"Yes."

"What was the cause of this lameness?" asked Mr. Hardy, trying to maintain his former air of confidence, though somewhat daunted by the man's shuffling manner and reply.

"My master said he had run a nail into his foot."

"Was the horse attended by a veterinary surgeon, or farrier?"

"No: master would not have one sent for."

"Was the animal unfit for use?"

"Yes."

"For how long?"

"Master said he could have rode it the third day."

"In which leg was it lame?"

"The off leg behind."

"Of course the injury must have been very slight if the horse was fit for riding the third day."

Jonathan Stebbing made no reply.

"You consider that the animal's lameness arose entirely from the nail having run into its foot, and that it was fit for use, and as valuable as ever at the end of three days."

"My master said so."

"And you agree with your master," said Hardly a little impatiently, provoked at what he fancied stupidity, and the man's inability to form an opinion of his own.

"Master did not ask what I thought."

"Was the horse lame at any other time whilst in Mr. Wyvill's possession."

"Master said not."

"Don't tell me what your master says;—what do you say yourself?" The man continued silent, looking red then white, and much confused.

"Was the horse lame at any other time whilst in Mr. Wyvill's possession I ask you?" repeated Hardy.

"Yes," said the witness after a little more hesitation.

"When was the horse lame?"

"Just before we came to Denham Park."

"Did you tell Mr. Wyvill of it?"

"Yes."

"And what did he say?"

"He—he—he—"

"Speak out," said the judge—"we cannot hear you."

"Yes, my lord. Master said I was to be

sure not to tell it to any one, 'cause it would injure the sale, but stand out, let what would happen, that it had never been lame, but when it picked up the nail; and that if I did this it should be the better for me," stammered the witness his words oozing out very slowly, and with a nervous tremor as if the truth had been wrung from him by terror, and against his will.

"Do you mean to say that Mr. Wyvill knew of the horse's being lame a short time before he sold it, and that he charged you to deny the fact, lest a knowledge of it should injure the sale?" questioned Hardy sternly, the indignation of the friend overcoming the prudence of the counsel.

"Yes; but I should not have told it, only for the oath, and my lord the judge," faltered the groom, his very lips turning white as he spoke, whilst his trembling hand clutched for support at the edge of the witness box.

"It is false!" exclaimed Rupert hotly, fixing

a scathing look on the speaker, who did not venture to glance towards him.

"Hush, sir! hush! remember where you are," whispered his attorney, dragging him down, for he had started up with the purpose, as it seemed, of seizing the pallid, trembling groom, who had revealed his dishonor.

Notwithstanding his usually calm demeanour, Rupert's feelings were very strong; and though he was silent and still, at his attorney's warning, the pressure of his teeth on the livid lip, till the blood sprang beneath that pressure, and the unconscious clenching of his hands gave sign of the storm within. He read the belief of his dishonor in the faces of those around—and saw himself without the means of clearing his character from the foul blot. A strange idea shot across him, and he darted a lightning glance towards that part of the sheriff's gallery where sat the party from Denham Park. Rosalind was gazing on him with a face of ashy paleness, but it was not at her

that he darted this searching, scrutinising look. She saw this, and following the direction of his eyes turned round on Edred Cottrell; but at the moment she did so, he was stooping to pick up his fallen glove, and it might be only fancy when she imagined that the hand which raised it shook.

A dead silence had succeeded to the groom's unexpected, and, as it seemed, most reluctant admission; and then there arose a murmur of mingled wonder and reprobation. Never had testimony in a nisi prius court created a greater sensation. Even the judge looked surprised, for Wyvill's honor had been hitherto unimpeached, whilst Mr. Drew cast a triumphant glance towards the jury, and Hardy, shocked at the effect of his own questioning, sank back on the bench from which he had so lately risen, overwhelmed with shame and confusion, and utterly unable to rally or resume any show of self-possession.

"Have you any more questions to put to

your witness?" asked Mr. Drew with a provoking smile.

"Yes—no—not now," stammered the young counsel, his hopes of establishing his friend's innocence and his own fame blighted by this one stroke.

"Did you see the nail that ran into the horse's foot?" asked Mr. Drew, fixing his little black, snake-like eyes with a fascinating gaze on the trembling witness, who however answered more readily and clearly than he had done before, gaining courage as he proceeded.

"No."

"Do you believe that any nail did run into its foot?"

"My master said—"

"I have nothing to do with your master now—what is your own belief?" said Mr. Drew, interrupting the witness, his contemptuous tone when saying 'I have nothing to do with your master,' inflicting a fresh pang on the suffering Rupert.

"Then I don't believe it was a nail."

"Yet Mr. Wyvill said so?"

"Yes."

"And your master said that the horse was quite well, and fit to ride on the third day after the accident?"

"Yes."

"Did he ride him then?"

"No."

"Did he assign any reason for not riding him?"

"He said the brown horse went easier."

"Oh! he said the brown horse went easier did he?"

"Yes."

"How soon did he ride the bay?"

"Not for three months."

"And where was the animal all that time?"

"It was turned out."

"Oh! turned out was it?" said Mr. Drew, who had a habit of repeating words, that he

wished to make an impression on the jury. "And was it quite sound all that time?"

"Master said so."

"Don't tell me what your master said—what do you yourself say? Was it perfectly sound after the third day?"

"No: that is, I did not think so; and can't on my conscience say as how it was."

"Where was it lame, and what do you think was the matter with it?"

"It was lame in the off leg behind, and it seemed to me that it had some'at the matter with it much the same as it has now, only not so bad."

Here followed some uninteresting questions and answers touching fetlocks, sinews, strains, spavins, &c. &c., which it would be wearisome to record.

"Do you think that the unsoundness then proceeded from the same cause as the unsoundness now?"

"Yes, only it was not so bad."

"The same cause only not so bad," repeated Mr. Drew. "When was it lame again?"

"Just before master came to stay at Dennam Park."

"That is a short time before it was sold—was it not?"

"Yes."

"Did you tell your master that it was lame?"

"Yes."

"And what did he say?"

"He told me to be sure not to tell any one."

"Did he give any reason for your silence?"

"He said nobody would buy the horse if it was known," answered the man after a pause, exhibiting great reluctance to speak out, though desired by the judge to do so as he could not hear him.

"Was any one by when he said this?"

"No."

"Did he promise you any reward for your silence?"

"He said it should be the better for me."

"What did you suppose he meant by that?"

"Mr. Wyvill has always been a kind and generous master, so I thought he would give me something."

"So you thought he would give you something, if you were silent—Did you ever tell this to any one before?"

"No."

"Recollect yourself. Not to any one? Not to Pollock, Mr. Adnam's servant?"

"Yes, I let it out to him one day by mistake; but he thought as how I was only joking, and so I let it go."

"And you would not have told it even here if you had not been frightened about breaking your oath? You did not think an oath had been such an awful thing till it came to the point."

"No; master was always a kind master,

and I should not have told of him, if I had not been forced—and I am very sorry now."

"And you say the horse was not quite sound when sold, that is he had been lame a short time before?"

"Yes."

"That will do," said Mr. Drew, resuming his seat after turning a self-complacent and confident look on the jury.

"Stop; I wish to ask you another question or two," said Hardy to the witness, who was leaving the box in all possible haste. "Did you tie a tin canister on to a dog's tail about ten days since?" asked the young counsel trying to assume a self-possession which he did not feel.

The question caused a general smile, but the mirth was not shared by the witness, who fumbled with his hat in his hand without replying.

"I ask you, Jonathan Stebbing, if you did

not tie a tin canister on to a dog's tail in the parish of Denham, about ten days since?"

"Yes," answered the groom, still fumbling with his hat.

"Speak out—my lord, the judge, does not hear you. Did not Mr. Wyvill come by whilst you were tormenting the poor animal?"

"He rode up whilst I and some others were looking at the dog."

"Did he blame you for tying the canister to the dog's tail?"

"He talked a good deal fine about it."

"Did not he say that it was very cruel towards the dog, and the little girl who owned it?"

"He said some'at like that."

"Did not you say to your master, when he blamed you, that you had done it before, and would do it again?"

"I do not remember what I said."

"Will you swear that you did not use these words?"

"I may have said some'at of the sort, when master was jawing about it," answered the groom sulkily.

"Were you not very angry at Mr. Wyvill's blaming you?"

"I was a little vexed then."

"Did he give you warning in consequence?"

"Master said so."

"Did not you think this a very harsh proceeding?"

"Yes."

"And to be revenged you swear that he wanted you to conceal the horse's having been lame before?"

"I was forced by my oath to tell the truth," answered the man sulkily.

"Forced by your oath to tell the truth," repeated Hardy incredulously. "Do not you think if you could reveal this of your master, that it would have been wiser in him to have let you torment the dog as you pleased, instead of giving you warning?"

"Master always thinks for himself," replied the man evasively.

"I did not ask what your master thought, but what you think."

"I have not thought about it."

"Should not you esteem it the act of a fool to offend a person, who has it in his power to do you a great injury?"

"Perhaps so."

"Then you would say that Mr. Wyvill is a fool, since he discharges you for cruelty and impertinence, when you have it in your power to tell what, if true, would blight his character, and lose his cause?"

"I don't say as how master is a fool; but he always does as he pleases; and he made sure that I would not tell of him; and no more I would if it had not been for my oath."

"Will you swear that Mr. Wyvill charged you not to tell any one that the horse had ever been lame before lest it should injure the sale, and that you should not be the worse for your

silence? Remember—you are upon your oath—that oath of which you profess to think so much; and will be liable to be tried for perjury if you swear falsely. Did your master say this or not?"

The witness looked down—he could not or would not meet the questioner's eye; and his lips grew of a livid paleness, but after a little hesitation he said—"Yes"—in a low voice.

"Speak out. On your oath did your master say this to you? Remember—be warned in time."

"Yes, he did," answered the groom more resolutely.

"And you never stated this before to any one, but always maintained that the horse was perfectly sound when sold, and had been so ever since the accident of the nail."

"Yes."

"What have you received, or been promised, to induce you to say differently now?"

"Nothing."

"On your oath, remember."

"Nothing," repeated the groom doggedly.

"Are you not seeking revenge for being turned away?"

"No:" answered the witness sharply, shuffling with his feet, and playing with his fingers.

Nothing further could be extracted from Jonathan Stebbing.

Thomas Fisher was next called, and a dark, ill-looking man stepped into the witness box.

Rosalind started—leant forward—gazed fixedly upon him for some moments, and then glanced round at Edred Cottrell. For an instant he met her eye—it was an instant only—the next he was turning to address Richard Weston.

We pass over some needful but uninteresting questions, and come at once to those of importance.

"Did you see Richard Todd on the night of the fair?" asked Hardy of the witness.

"Yes."

"Was he sober?"

"Yes."

Mr. Hardy looked down at his brief, then back to Wyvill and his attorney: it was evident that he had anticipated a different reply—the question could not have been understood.

"I ask you if Richard Todd was sober on the night of the fair?"

"Yes," repeated the witness.

"Was not he a little fresh?" asked Mr. Hardy, changing the shape of his question.

"No," answered the man sturdily.

"Did not you tell others that he was?" questioned Hardy, unable to conquer or conceal his surprise and annoyance.

"No."

"Did not you tell Jonathan Stebbing and others that Todd when you met him was drunk—or not sober—or fresh—or the worse for drink—or something to that effect?"

"No" answered the man as resolutely as before.

"Will you swear that you did not say this to Jonathan Stebbing?"

"Yes; I may have said that Todd had been drinking; but he was not the worse for it."

"What do you mean by the worse for it? Do you think he was likely to choose the safest road home, or able to guide his horse into the best path?"

"Yes; he could ride as well as you could now."

"Did he say anything about his new horse?"

"He said he had paid a good price for it; and hoped it would not turn out lame."

"Was the horse quite sound when you were walking by its side?"

"I thought one leg went a little oddly."

"What do you mean by oddly?"

"Stiff and odd like, as if he had been lame of that leg—or would be."

"Which leg was it?"

"The off leg behind."

"We are sold—the witnesses have been

bribed,"—whispered the attorney to Wyvill, whose look assented to the assertion, whilst Hardy hemmed, hawed, pulled his gown up on his shoulder, and then resumed his examination, but not with the same spirit or acuteness, that he had shown at the commencement of the trial.

"Did Todd try how his new horse could leap that night?"

"Not as I know of."

"Did not you see him leap from Farmer's Close, into Tanner's field?"

"No."

"Did not you whilst helping him out of the ditch say—that was a desperate leap, and you have lamed your new horse?—or words to that effect?"

"No; I did not help him out of a ditch."

"Did not you assist him to wipe the dirt off his coat?"

"No."

"Did not you see him riding across Farmer's Close?"

"No."

"Where did you see him?"

"On the high road."

"Where was he when you left him?"

"On the high road."

"Did not you see him cut across a field?"

"No."

"Did not he say that he should cut across the fields to his house because it was nearer? And did not you answer that he had better not as he had been drinking, and was riding his new horse?"

"No."

"Did not you tell Jonathan Stebbing that he had cut across the field?"

"No."

It was in vain that the young counsel plied the witness with question upon question, varying their forms in the hope of winning a different

reply, the man still persisted in his former denials, confining himself so pertinaciously to monosyllables that it was impossible to entrap him into a contradiction.

"What are you to receive for giving this evidence?" at length asked young Hardy, provoked beyond patience and prudence.

"Mr. Wyvill is to pay my expenses for being his witness," said the man, looking down as he had done throughout the whole of the examination, but permitting a grim smile to half curl his lip.

The idea of Wyvill's having to pay for such testimony caused others to smile as well as the witness.

His last hope was gone, and Hardy resumed his seat in despair.

"I will not trouble your witness with any questions, being quite satisfied with your admirable examination; and feeling convinced that you have extracted the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," observed Mr. Drew his

little bright eyes twinkling with triumph at his adversary's vexation, and above all at this last attempt to destroy the character of his own witness.

"Poor fellow! it is all up with Hardy; he needs success to inspirit him—he has not nerve to stand defeat," remarked one barrister to another;—and he was right.

The conviction that a verdict must be given against his friend—the fear that he had not conducted that friend's defence as skilfully as he might have done, joined to a doubt of his own abilities, now that those abilities were to be tested by trial, had confused and bewildered him during the latter part of his examination of the witnesses.

He coloured--grew pale— shook till his agitation became painfully apparent to all who wished him well, then with a desperate effort strove to regain a show at least of self-possession. The effort was unsuccessful, and there he sat overcome with shame and

vexation, blushing like a girl of sixteen, and not venturing to look up lest he should read in the countenances of those around him sarcasm or contempt. It was painful to see him, and so much was he liked for his amiable disposition that there were few who did not feel regret at his discomfiture.

The witness left the box and Mr. Drew rose for the plaintiff, pouncing as it were on his adversary's case, his snake like eye twinkling, rolling, glistening, with anticipated triumph—a triumph heightened by the knowledge that Wyvill held him in little estimation. The preliminary to his speech was as usual the pulling up his gown on his shoulder. What a pity that clergymen and barristers do not employ more skilful *artistes* in the construction of these said gowns, as the dragging them up on their shoulders is a most ungraceful movement.

"Gentlemen of the jury, my address to you need be but a short—a very short one (Mr.

Drew's were always long) nay, I might safely leave the case as it stands, and relying on your penetration waive my privilege of commenting on the evidence adduced for the defence, and my learned brother's eloquence, only that my silence might appear disrespectful to you, and my lord the judge," began Mr. Drew with that impudent, nonchalant manner which always distinguished his harangues till he had worked himself up into a seeming regard for the interests of his client. No feeling of diffidence or delicacy ever stayed or softened the torrent of his words. The crowd tittered at this allusion to his learned brother's eloquence —even the jury smiled at it, whilst poor Hardy writhed at the expression, and Wyvill bit his lip at the insult, for so he considered it to his friend—an insult the more galling from the speaker's merry smile.

"My learned brother has pointed out to your notice, nay pressed on your consideration, the weakness of our case—the deficiency of

our evidence, thereby of course implying the superior strength of his own. My client is an honourable man, and wishes to take no unfair advantage: we will be generous and change witnesses—that is, I will argue only on the testimony of those brought forward for the defendant. My learned brother admits that the horse was sold to the plaintiff for eighty pounds, with as full a warranty of soundness as mortal lips could give; and also allows that this same horse is now so lame as not only to be unfit for present use, but little likely to be serviceable hereafter. There is no question of identity here—no contradictory statements about a bay horse of fifteen hands high, and a brown horse of fourteen, which so often bewilder the judgment; here is the horse that was warranted perfectly sound, and is now lame:—so far we are agreed—it is always pleasant to agree with one's adversaries as far as one can—as long as our roads lay together let us jog on side by side on friendly terms; but

the question is from whence arose this lameness—this unfitness for use:—and here we are at issue. My learned brother would have you believe that the horse was never lame till after the sale, and that its lameness arose from a strain received in taking a desperate leap, whilst I maintain, and rely on convincing you, that the animal, far from being sound when sold had been subject to occasional lameness, notwithstanding the warranty, during the whole two years of its being in the possession of the defendant. Who shall determine this point? It is not for my learned brother to decide—it is not for me, but the decision, gentlemen of the jury, rests with you; and content am I that the decision should so rest, certain, from your well known discrimination, that your verdict will be in favour of my client. On what is your decision to be founded? On the testimony of witnesses sworn to reveal the truth—the whole truth—and nothing but the truth; and it is on this testimony that I found

my claim for a verdict, which shall save my client from a most shameful, and dishonourable attempt to injure him in purse, and in character—character the greatest treasure—the proudest boast of a true hearted Englishman! Gentlemen of the jury, you must not consider this as a mere money trial—a bare matter of pounds shillings and pence. I admit that my client is provoked, and naturally so, at having paid the price of a sound horse, yet unhappily purchased a lame one—he is provoked too, at having relied on the word of one who is highly esteemed in the world, and having been deceived, and on that account laughed at by his friends for a want of judgment in horseflesh. No one likes to be laughed at, especially in a matter of horse dealing, for which every Englishman is supposed to have an intuitive talent. But it is not the loss of the money, though the horse for which he paid eighty pounds is really not worth above three; it is not the shame of having been deceived by one, who has hitherto borne the

character of a high-minded gentleman—it is not the pain of being laughed at as a dupe that has induced him to bring this matter before you, and claim that justice which is the right of every Briton, and which he is certain of obtaining at your hands, though his adversary is an esquire, and he but a simple yeoman—it is not all this, I repeat, irritating as it must be, that brings me before you to-day, as the humble advocate for an injured man. It is not alone to recover money—it is still more to clear his character from the most shameful aspersions—to overthrow a base conspiracy that he has been compelled, in self-defence, to bring his case before a court of justice. Gentlemen of the jury," continued Mr. Drew, striking his hand on the back of the seat, so as to attract the more attention, and convey an idea of great indignation; " I stated in my opening speech that my client was an ill used—a very ill used man;—that he had trusted a gentleman's word and been deceived—that he had been induced,

persuaded, to give eighty pounds for an animal not really worth three;—I stated the matter simply, and mildly—I sought no rhetoric to arouse your indignation—I employed words of softened meaning, though the contents of my brief would have justified the use of harder terms;—I could not—I would not believe that any gentleman could have so acted. I said nothing of cheating, swindling, and a conspiracy to defraud, yet, now that you have heard the evidence, I ask, should I not have been justified in the use of those terms? Of those terms do I say?—there are no words in the English language strong enough to describe the defendant's conduct as it deserves. I would not character that defendant's conduct before as it merited, lest I should brand him with names that might cling to him unjustly through life—I gave the defendant the chance of clearing himself from the foul charge of an intention to defraud—I waited to hear what his witnesses should say in his favour;—they have

spoken—they were examined and cross-examined by my learned brother, with all the ability of a skilful advocate, and the eager zeal of a friend. So searching were his questions, so fully did he elicit the truth, that I put no questions to one of his witnesses, and but few to the others.

"They have spoken, I repeat—and you have heard them. Have not their words borne out all that I stated? Has not their testimony proved all that I asserted?

"Mr. Todd is a tenant of Lord Lanesk's—he and his ancestors have rented the same farm for years, and by honest and honorable industry acquired a fortune. Mr. Todd likes a good horse—he knows how to value and deserves one too, being noted throughout the county as an excellent rider. It is a taste he shares with many—a truly English taste, I may say, and long may it continue so, since to this is owing the acknowledged superiority of our horses. As I said before, he likes a good horse

—he goes to the fair at C—he sees a fine, handsome looking animal—he is taken with its appearance—enquires to whom it belongs, and hears it is the property of the defendant, a gentleman of birth and fortune, and whose word, up to this time, had been considered as good as a bond. He asks the price:—it is high—more than he had intended to give; but it is better to give more for a horse belonging to a gentleman, than run the risk of being cheated by a horse-dealer. Frank and honorable himself he never suspected the good faith of the defendant, and trusting to his warranty did not examine the animal as minutely as he would otherwise have done. Is my client to suffer for this honorable trustfulness? Is the deceived to be the loser?—the deceiver the gainer? No, gentlemen of the jury, you I am sure will not say so—you will uphold the scales of justice with a more equal hand.

"Proud of his new purchase, and careful too, instead of trusting it to a servant, he rides

it home himself. His friends hint at its being lame, but he repels the idea with the indignation of a virtuous mind. The horse was warranted to him as sound by a person of unimpeachable honor, and he was not to be roused to suspicion by hints, or even assertions.

"On reaching home he grooms the animal himself, for, being ever humane and considerate to those beneath him, he prefers performing the duty of a domestic to depriving his servants of their needful rest. Yet this very humanity and consideration are brought against him! His having been delayed on the road by business, which required him to call at the Black Swan is attributed to incipient intoxication—his kindness of heart in grooming the horse so carefully himself to the desire of effacing all signs of a fall. A fall!—and how has a fall been proved? We shall see. I have said that Mr. Todd was proud of his new purchase, and the next morning he has the animal out for the purpose of showing him to some of

his friends. The animal is lame. He is astonished, but still unsuspicious. The shoe may pinch him—he may have picked up a pebble; —no, neither is the case.

"The horse gets lamer and lamer—he calls in a veterinary surgeon, and is told that the animal has been lame before—will never be sound again.

"Conceiving it possible that he might have misunderstood the defendant, and at the worst unwilling to expose a gentleman of hitherto unblemished character to the obloquy of having given a false warranty, he goes to Mr. Wyvill, and after stating the circumstances proposes that he shall take back the horse and return the money. This was the act of an upright and fair dealing man not wishing to expose another, though that other had deceived him. How was his proposition met? The defendant not only refuses to return the money, but loads the plaintiff with abuse. Unfortunately there was no third person present at the conference

to depose to this; but the fact is apparent from after circumstances. Not only does the defendant refuse to comply with the fair, I might almost say generous proposition of my client, but, relying on being backed by others, on bringing forward unflinching witnesses to swear to the truth of his assertions, he accuses the plaintiff of having lamed the horse on the night of sale, by having forced him to take a desperate leap when he himself was excited by liquor, and then coming as a swindler to claim the return of the money on account of the very lameness which his own imprudence had occasioned. We shall soon see to whom the epithet swindler is most appropriate.

"What witnesses does he call to prove the previous soundness of this valuable horse, my client's excited state, and this desperate leap? Jonathan Stebbing—his own servant mark you—and Thomas Fisher. And what do Jonathan Stebbing and Thomas Fisher swear? Not what the defendant desired and expected that they

would swear, though my learned brother pressed them hard. Stebbing swears that the horse had been lame more than once whilst in the possession of the defendant, though the defendant had expressly asserted the contrary; and moreover he swears that his master desired him to conceal this lameness, lest the sale should be injured thereby.

"Fisher swears that the plaintiff was perfectly sober, whilst conversing with him; that the horse was then lame, or oddish, or stiff; and that he neither saw nor heard of any leap.

"I have nothing to do with the character of those witnesses, that is my learned brother's concern. It is clear that he had expected them to give other evidence; they were to be the active instruments of the conspiracy against my client; but, struck with the sanctity of an oath —their consciences touched by the dread of committing perjury, they admit the truth, though very reluctantly; and the plaintiff's case is established by the testimony of the very

men, who were brought to swear against him. The guilty one has fallen into the pit dug for the innocent.

"My learned brother, aware of the consequences of such a disclosure, endeavours to lessen its effect. And how does he endeavour to do this? Why by attempting to injure the character of his own witnesses, a course of proceeding scarcely paralleled I believe in the annals of justice. He accuses them of swearing falsely—of having been bribed—expresses wonder and indignation at their perjury, and even ventures to warn them of the awfulness of an oath. It is said that we barristers take a great latitude of speech—I know not for the future how I shall be able to deny the charge. I have nothing to do with the previous character or assertions of Jonathan Stebbing, and Thomas Fisher. They are not my client's witnesses—I must beg you to bear that in mind, gentlemen of the jury—they are the defendant's witnesses—my learned brother's witnesses

—his favorite witnesses, kept till the last, though he turns upon them when they refuse to say what in his opinion they should have said. He accuses them of swearing falsely, but you have too much penetration not to see that it was the truth, the real truth which was wrung from them though reluctantly. Yes, gentlemen of the jury, it was the defendant's witnesses—mark that—who swore to the occasional lameness of this warranted sound horse—who swore to the defendant's wish to have the circumstance concealed, and denied that any leap was taken.

"And now, gentlemen of the jury," he continued, again striking his hand on the back of the bench with considerable violence, "is it too much to say that I cannot find words in the English language to designate, as it deserves to be designated, this foul conspiracy—this base—this shameful—this infamous endeavour to blight the character, and thus

destroy the happiness of an upright, honest man?"

"Had not you better leave the court, Mr. Wyvill?" whispered his attorney, pitying the pangs endured by Rupert from Mr. Drew's address, and fearing from his deadly paleness that he would faint.

"No: it shall be borne," answered Wyvill with a steady, though a husky voice.

"I feel satisfied that my client will leave this place righted in fame—righted in fortune by your decision; and really beg your pardon for having detained you so long in a case so clear. I will only just dissect my learned brother's witnesses a little closer, and then leave the case in your hands, certain of a verdict for my client," continued Mr. Drew with a triumphant air.

We will not follow him in this dissection, sufficient to say that it was masterly, and the closing part of his lengthened harangue, if

possible, still more galling to Hardy and Wyvill than its commencement.

The judge summed up with the clearness and impartiality fitting his high character—the jury whispered together for a minute, and then the foreman pronounced a verdict for the plaintiff.

Rosalind had leant forward to watch the jury during that minute's pause, but as she heard the verdict sank back on her seat with a deep drawn breath, as if her respiration had been before suspended by her eager listening. She heard nothing of costs or damages—she was only looking at—only thinking of Wyvill, who, rising without a glance at the gallery, quitted the court, leaning heavily on his solicitor's arm, followed by Hardy.

"Are you going to faint, Miss Trevor? You are as white as a ghost," observed Miss Bailey spitefully.

"This crowded court is so very warm," replied Rosalind rallying.

"It is; I shall be glad to get into the open air," said Mrs. Denham, preparing at once to depart. Of course her will was law, and the whole party followed.

Edred offered his arm to Rosalind, but Terry Weston did the same, at the same moment, and she took his in preference.

"Could not you defer your shopping till some other day, young ladies?" asked Mrs. Denham as they were walking towards the inn. "I am weary, and should like to return home immediately."

The young ladies did not care about shopping, and would be happy to do whatever Mrs. Denham wished, so the horses were put to and the britzcha filled in the course of a few minutes, during which interval Terry Weston, instead of conversing on the late trial, as did his brother and Edred, was engaged in arranging his stock and whiskers, and descanting on the merits of an embroidered waistcoat exhibited in one of the shop windows opposite.

Mrs. Denham's leaning back in the carriage, as if much fatigued, prevented any general conversation during the drive home, which Rosalind, who sat beside her, did not regret; and the Misses Bailey, who occupied the other seat, whispered their comments on the various barristers without exciting the attention of their companions.

The gentlemen remained to see more of the fun, as Richard called it.

"This is my doing, Wyvill. My miserable want of self-possession—my deficiency in experience and ability has ruined your cause," said Hardy to his friend, writhing under the shame of a first defeat, and the consciousness of his own failure.

"No, no, Hardy; it was no fault of yours—you deserve no blame. I thank you for your zeal, and will engage for your future success; you only need a little more experience and confidence in your own powers," answered Wyvill grasping his hand.

"This is kind—most kind and generous of you, Wyvill; but I cannot be blind to my own shame. I shall give up the profession—I have not nerve for it. Had Drew been your counsel the verdict would have been in your favor. I should not have availed myself of your friendly desire to bring me into notice—I should have insisted on your employing him."

"I would not employ him to defend my cat," replied Wyvill indignantly, still smarting under his remarks. "But here he comes—I must speak with him."

Hardy and the attorney would have stopped him, but it was too late; Wyvill had already advanced to meet Mr. Drew, who had left the court to take some refreshment.

Rupert Wyvill had quick and strong feelings—passions they might be called; but his mother had early taught him the duty of self-control, and though it was a difficult, a very difficult task at that moment, when his whole frame shook from the bitter pangs inflicted by

the speech of his adversary's counsel, yet his manner when addressing that counsel if stern, was dignified and gentlemanly—not irritating, but commanding. His burning eye was fixed on his opponent as he spoke, and his tone was lofty; but there was nothing offensive in the frankness with which he stated his displeasure.

"I am aware, Mr. Drew, that gentlemen at the bar consider themselves entitled to great privileges, and take great licence in their speeches delivered in a court of justice, excusing the strong language, which they at times employ, by the plea of zeal for their clients; but I think, on consideration, you must admit that you have to-day employed language towards me stronger than even such a plea can justify."

Mr. Drew's little snake like eyes, which had a minute before been glistening with triumph, scanned the speaker for a second; and then his course was taken. Mr. Drew piqued himself on brow beating witnesses, confusing the

opposing counsel, cutting up his adversaries, and bewildering juries, and if possible judges, by his searching questions—sarcastic replies—lengthy harangues, and impudent assertions; and all this, as he maintained, from a sense of duty towards his clients; but out of court, Mr. Drew was not an ill-naturned man, nor one hard to deal with. As an advocate, he cared not whom he wounded, or how he wounded—as a man, he took no pleasure in giving pain except when greatly irritated; and there was something in Wyvill's address so frank and dignified that he was touched by the manly appeal, and answered accordingly. Besides, he had marked his suffering during the trial, and having just achieved a victory, could afford to be just, if not generous, and the impudent barrister was, for the time, transformed into the feeling and almost polished gentleman.

"Not having the honor of your acquaintance, Mr. Wyvill, I could not have intended

any thing personal by my remarks. I know that we gentleman of the long robe are accused by those not in the profession, of giving our tongues a greater licence than befits us; but I will put it to yourself, whether, taking merely the evidence of your own witnesses, I used stronger language than their testimony justified? Should you not have thought the same of a stranger upon hearing such evidence, though you might not have said it?"

"As you place the subject before me, Mr. Drew, I feel that I have no right to complain of your language," replied Rupert candidly, but with a quivering lip. "And yet their testimony was false!" he added passionately.

"Very possibly, though as Mr. Todd's counsel I was bound to maintain its truth. Procure proof of their perjury, and I shall be happy to be joined with my learned brother here in Wyvill versus Stebbing and Fisher: and ready to unsay all that I have to-day as

counsel for the plaintiff felt myself called upon to say."

"I accept the challenge," replied Rupert, pleased with the frank, good-humour of the barrister. "I shall know no peace till I have cleared my honor by convicting those fellows of falsehood."

"As a man—not an advocate, mind you—I wish you success; but you take this matter too much to heart. The world little heeds what we barristers say, hinting irreverently that we are paid to abuse our opponents. And do you take courage, my learned brother," he added with a friendly and cheering manner, though his little eyes twinkled as he saw Hardy wince at the appellation. "If your maiden speech might have been better—it might have been worse. People prate of my unblushing impudence—why, I could only stammer through two sentences with my first brief; and then ran out of court, blushing like a miss. Your cross questioning of my witnesses

was admirable; and had you felt less deeply, you would have acted more judiciously. Friendship and feeling only embarrass a young pleader, though they may inspirit a worn out stager like myself—that is, if I could be touched by either. Try again—you may be leader on the circuit yet. Good morning, Mr. Wyvill; I am sorry if I have pained you."

"Good morning, Mr. Drew," responded Rupert in a much milder mood than he had enjoyed some ten minutes previous.

END OF VOL. II.

Printed by T. C. Newby, Angel Hill, Bury.

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3 0112 084217030